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CHAPTERS IN EUROPEAN HISTORY.

VOLUME I.

1897.

CHAPTERS IN EUROPEAN HISTORY

WITH

An Introductory Dialogue

ON

THE PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

BY

WILLIAM SAMUEL LILLY

In Lebensfluten, im Thatensturm,
Wall' ich auf und ab,
Wehe hin und her!
Geburt und Grab,
Ein ewiges Meer,
Ein wechselnd Weben
Ein glühend Leben,
So schaff' ich am sausenden Webstuhl der Zeit
Und wirke der Gottheit lebendiges Kleid.
Goethe.

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

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1886

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TO

THE REV. JAMES PORTER, D.D.,

MASTER OF PETERHOUSE, CAMBRIDGE.

My Dear Master,

In asking permission to inscribe this book to you, I desired to pay a tribute to a friendship extending from the days when, as a Scholar of Peterhouse, I enjoyed the advantage of your tuition. I desired also to associate a work, the fruit of studies then begun, with the "dear and dedicated name" of the College which, besides much else, owes chiefly to your unflagging energy and unwearied zeal, the architectural restorations so admirably conceived and so effectively carried out.

I could wish, indeed, that these *Chapters in European History* were less unworthy of Peterhouse and of you. I am well aware that each of them, for the adequate treatment of its subject, should be expanded into a volume. And upon such a topic as *The Christian Revolution*, *The Renaissance and Liberty*, *The*

Principles of '89, it would have been far easier to write five hundred pages than fifty. But the age in which we live, on the one hand, demands large views —*vues d'ensemble*, as the French speak,—and on the other, insists upon having its reading presented in the smallest possible compass. With these requirements, a writer, who desires to be read, must reckon. And perhaps to my recognition of them may, to some extent, be due the favour with which the studies now brought together have been received. As you are aware, the Introductory Dialogue, and the first, second, seventh, and eighth chapters were originally published in the *Contemporary Review;* the fourth and sixth chapters in the *Dublin Review;* and the fifth chapter in the *Quarterly Review*, where too a part of the third chapter appeared, another portion of it having been given to the world in the *Nineteenth Century*. It is by the kind permission of the proprietors and editors of those *Reviews* that I use these essays for my present purpose. But all have been more or less altered, and some, to a large extent, re-written.

I may add, that disconnected as the several chapters of this work may appear upon first sight,

readers who bestow upon it a more than superficial examination, will find that it is informed by a real unity of thought. It deals, from the standpoint indicated in the Introductory Dialogue, with the three great movements which, during the last two thousand years, have done most to shape the history of Europe: Christianity, the Renaissance, the French Revolution. My chief object has been to exhibit the ideas underlying those movements. The well-known dictum of Hegel—profoundly true it seems to me—that the philosophy of history is the supreme end of philosophy, may serve to indicate the spirit in which I have written. And while I must not anticipate your agreement with all that is said in these pages, I am assured from experience of finding in you a critic like the counsellor of his youthful Muse commemorated by Pope as a

> ——————————"judge and friend,
> Who justly knew to blame or to commend;
> To failings mild, but zealous for desert;
> The clearest head, and the sincerest heart."

I am, my dear Master,

Most truly yours,

W. S. Lilly.

London, Jan. 1, 1886.

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Goethe's greatness. But it had its limits. His judgments are sometimes narrow, as this seems to me to be. His methodic spirit was not at home in history. I recognize the madness and the wickedness in the annals of the world as fully as any one can. But I certainly think that some further facts may be drawn from them. Here comes our

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THE RENAISSANCE AND LIBERTY.

WHAT CAN HISTORY TEACH US?

GRIMSTON. Proof-sheets again, I see. "Chapters in European History." Of making many books there is no end. And, I suppose, as long as the public will buy, authors will write. But, of all subjects that can occupy the mind of man, this of human history seems to me to be one of the vainest. You remember Goethe's saying: "The history of the world in the eyes of the thinker is nothing but a tissue of absurdities, a mass of madness and wickedness, nothing can be made of it."

LUXMOORE. I yield to no one in admiration of Goéthe's greatness. But it had its limits. His judgments are sometimes narrow, as this seems to me to be. His methodic spirit was not at home in history. I recognize the madness and the wickedness in the annals of the world as fully as any one can. But I certainly think that some further facts may be drawn from them. Here comes our

friend Temperley. I wonder what he would have to say about it?

TEMPERLEY. About what? You know I am one of Shakespeare's "dumb wise men."

GRIMSTON. "Seul le silence est grand." But your Grandeur must know that Luxmoore has written a book of history, and I am telling him, upon the authority of Goethe, that it is but lost labour.

LUXMOORE. The truth is our too candid friend and I are both blessed—cursed, he would say—with the taste for great questions. And what a great question is that of the moral significance of history.

TEMPERLEY. Well, I should like very much to hear what you and Grimston have to say about it. I am an excellent listener, as you know; and, having no opinions in particular of my own on the subject, I can promise benevolent neutrality to both of you. You meet on the common ground that history discloses a vast number of facts about the past career of humanity. The point at issue is, I suppose, Can we learn anything from those facts regarding the great enigma of human existence? or can they even yield us any practical lessons for the guidance of life?

GRIMSTON. Yes; we meet on the common ground of facts—the *débris* of the past. But remember, that those facts are confined to a very limited period of the existence of our race, that they are most fragmentary and imperfect, and that no man living, however encyclopedic his knowledge, can be ac-

quainted with more than a few of them. Not very promising materials for a philosophy of history!

LUXMOORE. True, the historic period of humanity goes back but a little way, and, of course, much of the record of human action during that time is lost. But much remains. A vast number of details are enwrapped in hopeless obscurity. They would not add much to our real information if we knew them. The general facts stand out with sufficient clearness in the life of the race—a vast series, throwing abundant light upon man and his environment and development. Surely this is unquestionable.

GRIMSTON. Three or four thousand years! Make it five thousand, as you certainly may. But what is this but a mere fragment of the ages during which our race has existed and has had a history? However, I will be generous, and will let you throw in the prehistoric period too. I am far from undervaluing the marvellous display of scientific induction by which our knowledge of the past has been extended beyond any historical monuments. Indeed, I confess that this unconscious history seems to me to be of much more value than what I read in the professed historians whose narrative, I strongly suspect, is mainly what Napoleon called it, "a fable agreed upon." Myths are truer than literature; language does not lie. Comparative mythology reveals to us the condition of our race in remote ages, when no historian existed or could exist; comparative philology discloses to us archaic facts, which

are, even now, the most important factors in our every-day life: the filiation of races, nascent religions, aboriginal laws, the fundamental constitution of human speech, when, as our friend Sayce conjectures, vocal signs superseded pictorial as vehicles of man's thought. But our geologists go back further, and show us the River Drift and Cave men of their Tertiary period and the strange forms of earlier animate existence in the two periods which preceded it: while our astronomers and chemists, lifting the veil of ages higher still, reveal epochs well ascertained, though incalculable, before the earth could have become the seat of life. Think of the planetary period, the solar period, the molecular period, nay, the atomic period, containing the promise and potentiality of all that was to come after. Remember what you no more doubt than I do—that the whole solar system is but a point in the vast order of the universe. And then consider what man really is, what the importance of the individual or the race can possibly be in the sum of things. A mere parasite of the earth, crawling on this planet for some brief hour of its brief existence—while the earth again is a mere satellite of a star, one of the countless myriads of the like conglomerations of nebulous atoms peopling space —man is a very nothing: his supposed royalty is the emptiest of illusions. We are such stuff as dreams are made of; and yet you talk of a science or philosophy of human action, and seek in that, I suppose, the key to the great enigma. "Oh, Madness! Pride, Impiety"!

TEMPERLEY. You too might quote the *Essay on Man:*

> "All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
> Whose body nature is, and God the soul:"

but, probably you won't answer our friend so.

LUXMOORE. No. I would rather follow Grimston just now to the limits of our knowledge. Time is no more. Space ceases. If you like to put it so, Kant's antinomies warn us, Thus far shalt thou go, and no further. We are brought face to face with the Infinite. And in the presence of the Infinite, small and great, past and present, are words quite devoid of meaning. Can we shut up the Absolute within the region of the Relative? bound It by the Forms and Categories and what they reveal? The philosophy of history, like all philosophy, brings us at length to the noumenal. Follow it far enough, and the science of history, if there be such science, leads to that which transcends phenomena. The nothingness of man! Most true.

> "We feel that we are nothing: for all is Thou and in Thee.
> We feel that we are something: that also has come from Thee."

TEMPERLEY. Well, don't let us become dithyrambic and lose ourselves in "Infinite Idealities, Immeasurable Realities." Let us avoid Cloud Cuckoo Town, and keep on *terra firma*. Grimston's point, I take it, is, that in the face of what we now know of the great world order, we must all admit that as the earth is not the centre of the Universe, so

it is not the special scene or stage on which the drama of divine justice is played before the assembled angels of heaven. I am repeating the words of some one else, I think, but I don't remember who, nor does it matter. I think we must agree with Grimston that the view of our race, and of its importance in the sum of things, taken by those who saw in the sun only a great light to rule the day, in the stars merely "blessed candles of the night," is not possible to us.

LUXMOORE. We must speak cautiously, and according to our knowledge, and that is confined to our planet. Of the modes and vicissitudes of existence in other worlds we know nothing whatever. And so we have no means of comparison: no data from which to construct a theory of the Universe. What is my soul in the measureless creation?—ἐν ἀμετρήτῳ κτίσει—asked the wise man two thousand years ago. And we can only echo the What? Still the highest fact in the order of existence of which we have knowledge—after the Absolute and Eternal—is Man. And, as Temperley suggests, we shall do well to confine ourselves strictly to our proper theme, which is whether what we know of man's past career can teach us any moral lesson, and, if so, what.

GRIMSTON. You glide skilfully away from thin ice, my dear Luxmoore. But you are right. What can history teach us? is our subject. Well, let us suppose that you have collected your facts, religious, commercial, physiological, industrial, literary, artistic,

political, and military, and have operated upon them according to the most approved modern methods: analyzing and classifying them, exhibiting their relations and interdependence, seizing the general ideas which underlie them, and deducing the laws which complete and prove them: let us suppose you have accomplished this laborious task with that passion for exactness, patience in research, judicial appreciation of authorities, with which I willingly credit you: then comes the question, what philosophy is to be the outcome of it? Shall we say with Taine, that in the vast battle-field of human existence, with all its confusion and tumult, everything obeys the command of Necessity, and moves towards an inevitable end? or with Littré, that history is a natural phenomenon explicable by the theory of physiological determinism? or with Bunsen, that it is mainly the growth of the religious conscience of mankind? or with Hegel, that it is the development of spirit—the essence of which is freedom—in an unbroken continuity of cause and effect, and that all its phenomena are reasonable and intelligible? or with Schiller, that it is a long contest between self-will and the universal will? or with Buckle, that the great motive force in it is intellectual manifested in physical science? or with Renan, that time and a tendency to progress explain everything? Shall we adopt Comte's law of the three states? or subscribe to the nine propositions in which Kant sets forth his cosmopolitical idea? Shall we agree with Schelling, that history is the

evolution of the Absolute, a gradual self-manifestation of God? or shall we go back to St. Augustine and his two cities, or to Bossuet's variation on the same theme? or adopt Schlegel's later attempt to solve the enigma by the creed of Catholicism? I might continue my catalogue of philosophies of history almost indefinitely. But our dumb wise man yonder will perhaps prefer "not to die a listener." Don't you think, however, when we consider the conflict of authority between historical philosophers, that history had better let philosophy alone, and confine itself to narrative, as Thiers did? "L'histoire c'est le portrait," was a *dictum* of his, I remember.

LUXMOORE. Well, but even Thiers had his philosophy of history, such as it was: a philosophy of materialistic fatalism which may be formulated in his hero's famous phrase, that God is on the side of the heaviest battalions. Indeed, every historian above the rank of a chronicler or annalist must be more or less of a philosopher. Man is so made that he seeks himself everywhere: in the story of the past, as in the physical world.

> "Borné dans sa nature, infini dans ses vœux
> Imparfait ou déchu, l'homme est le grand mystère."

For the rest, I think there is much to be learned from all the writers on the philosophy of history whom you have mentioned, and from many more whom you spared us. Perhaps Buckle is the least instructive of them, belonging as he did to the straightest sect of

Determinism. Besides, with all his energy and perseverance, he was unfortunately quite unable to distinguish a good book from a bad one.

TEMPERLEY. Well, but what we want to know is your own view of the philosophy of history. The question asked long ago by the Latin poet goes to the heart of the matter:

> "Curarent Superi terras, an nullus inesset
> Rector, et incerto fluerent mortalia casu."

Do you hold that history is, in any sense, a revelation? Can we find in it God? Providence? a divine Government of the World?

LUXMOORE. Yes, and No. Here too it is true that the eye sees what it brings with it to see. Religious faith is spoken of by theologians as an illumination—a spiritual sight. History is a looking-glass. The man whose eyes have been opened will assuredly see God there, for he sees Him everywhere. And as assuredly the man whose eyes are holden will not see Him there, for he sees Him nowhere. "Quid cæco cum speculo?"

GRIMSTON. That seems like a variation on the old tune, "Sapientes qui sentiunt mecum."

LUXMOORE. I know it must sound so. And, in a sense, you are right. Cardinal Newman has said, "It is a great question whether Atheism is not as philosophically consistent with the phenomena of the physical world taken by themselves—that is, apart from psychological phenomena, apart from moral

considerations, apart from the moral principles by which they must be interpreted, apart from that idea of God which wakes up in the mind under the stimulus of intellectual training—as the doctrine of a creative and governing Power." And whether this be so or not as regards the material world, it certainly seems to me to hold good as to human history.

GRIMSTON. Newman has always appeared to me one of those men whose doubts are a good deal better than their certainties. There is a saying of Renan's, which I dare say you remember, about the Great Unconscious Artist who seems to preside over the apparent caprices of history. Well, I account that—I am speaking in sober sadness—to be a most religious and reverent saying. When we consider what the annals of the world really are, the sadness, the hopelessness, the aimlessness, the desolation, written upon every page of them—I say that the conception of an Unconscious First Cause is most reverent and religious, for the best excuse for such a creation is that the Creator did not know what he was doing.

LUXMOORE. I do not deny that you may read von Hartmann's Unconscious or Schopenhauer's Will into history. I do not deny that the facts lend themselves to many interpretations. Change the lights and you change the landscape. The question is, I suppose, whether it is possible to view the facts in Bacon's "lumen siccum," and to let them speak for themselves. I do not pretend to be able to deduce from history, to your satisfaction, the doctrine of an All Holy, All

Wise, and All Loving Father of all. I admit that the phenomena, *taken by themselves*, if they point to any Deity at all, indicate rather Siva, the Destroyer, than Vishnu, the Preserver. But if you look at the macrocosm without in the light shed by the microcosm within, if you call to your aid what, as I judge, is the most certain of all our knowledge, I mean those primary ethical truths which rest upon the intuitions of the practical reason, I think that history does witness for the Living and True God, and that it is a Preacher of great moral verities.

TEMPERLEY. You admit, at all events, if I apprehend you rightly, that the old ecclesiastical way of writing history is no longer possible: that St. Augustine's historical philosophy or Bossuet's is out of date. And indeed I suppose that no man outside a Catholic Seminary would now maintain that the Church is a sufficient answer to the enigma of the World.

LUXMOORE. St. Augustine and Bossuet are right, in my judgment, as to their fundamental thought. Their synthesis is imperfect. How could it help being so? It is impossible to read the *City of God* or the *Discourse on Universal History* without falling under the spell of those mighty masters. The majestic march of their narrative, their pictorial phrases, the wealth of meaning which they often concentrate into a single word, the loftiness of their ethical tone, and that indescribable something of the prophet which we find in them—especially in St. Augustine—take us

captive. But if we weigh the matter coldly and critically, we must allow that their vision was limited; that the pictures which they have drawn, however finely conceived, are wanting in historical perspective: that their philosophy to a large extent—Bossuet's almost entirely—depends upon an arbitrary arrangement of a narrowly restricted collection of facts fitting in with their theories. The beauty and sublimity of ancient Hellas, the majesty and wisdom of the great Roman Commonwealth, made no adequate impression upon them. Of the vast civilizations of Asia, which carried commerce, physics, philosophy, theosophy, so far, while Europe lay still in its primeval forests, they had no knowledge. And of those conquests of the modern mind over the physical world which have so altered our ways of thought and action they did not even dream.

GRIMSTON. Yes: they would have found it difficult to dovetail Buddhism or the Newtonian astronomy into their scheme of things: while as to Darwin's discoveries—but I spare you. I admit with you that their great literary gifts impose on one. But their dominant idea—is it not that until the age of Augustus the whole world was given over to decadence and corruption, with the doubtful exception of a small Semitic tribe—well described by Buckle as "an obstinate and ignorant race, which owed to other peoples any scanty knowledge they ever attained"?

LUXMOORE. No. I do not find that their dominant thought. It seems to me that the great, the

most true, idea which informs their pages is the idea of Evolution, which I take to be the irrefutable lesson of human history, and the real basis of historical philosophy.

TEMPERLEY. This is interesting. If you are not playing with the word—which I do not suppose—and can establish your position, you will be binding old and new together, to some purpose.

LUXMOORE. It is clear to me that in the moral as in the physical world, Evolution, Progress, Development, is the universal law. Everywhere there is expansion and concentration: advance from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous, from the less to the more determined, by a gradual explication of latent force; while, on the other hand, there is a process of differentiation from simplicity to complexity, as the multiplicity of parts becomes co-ordinated and subordinated, in order to the preservation and expansion of the whole.

TEMPERLEY. Well, I suppose that one of the most definitive conquests of the modern mind is the establishment of the unity of all natural forces and operations. Does any thinker of account now doubt the identity of universal being? All the sciences are drawing together, and everywhere there is solidarity and development. Laws apparently the most diverse are but variations on this eternal theme. I think there can be no doubt — Luxmoore, I feel sure, won't doubt it—that social and moral problems, I may say religious problems too, assume quite a new

aspect in the light cast upon them by the physical sciences.

LUXMOORE. No, I do not question it. Solidarity or the vital unity of things, their necessary subjection to one law and consequent adaptation each to each, is undeniable, if we would not stultify science. The spectroscope shows it as regards matter: the microscope as regards bodily organisms: the recurrences, averages, seeming fatalities of history as regards man—the spirit robed in flesh. If all things are *ex uno*, there must be solidarity. And it is an article of the universal creed that all things are *ex uno*. Are they also *in unum?* tending towards a centre, which is at the same time an apex, drawing them not only onwards, but also upwards? Surely they are, and there is the law of evolution, the existence of which, as it seems to me, no one capable of forming a sane opinion on the matter can now question. The controversy begins when we ask whether that law is subordinate, or supreme. Let us pass it by, for the time at all events. It would take us too far. I hold that all our knowledge radiates from one centre, and that it all points to one truth. Leibnitz says that a single monad, an imperceptible atom, is a mirror of the universal order. Much more so is man, the sum of so many and so diverse monads. In him all the powers of nature meet. The infinitely complex phenomena which unite in him are all reducible to one law. And by a necessity of our nature we seek that law, in history as in physics.

GRIMSTON. I like this. But explain further, please. Although, indeed, I am afraid that it will be as Talleyrand said: "Si nous nous expliquons, nous cesserons de nous entendre."

LUXMOORE. To come, then, to our proper theme. If we take the whole career of man on this planet, so far as we know it, and the human race as a whole, surely the fact is beyond dispute that, materially, socially, ethically, there has been vast progress. Of the subjugation of the external world I need hardly speak. From the day that the first skin was made into a garment, the first flint shaped rudely into an arrow-head, the first crooked stick used to scratch the ground, to this age of broadcloth, breech-loaders, and steam ploughs, the victory of mind over matter has gone on progressing: for on that day the law of natural selection was vanquished: man burst the bonds in which nature is bound, and asserted his freedom. Again, look at the social order. The unit of archaic society is the family. The individual does not exist. Gradually he is evolved with his attributes of personal liberty and private property, and we can trace the steps of the process, from the cumbrous legal fictions by which the *filius familias* acquired his freedom, and the right of testamentary disposition was established, down to the latest effort of contemporary jurisprudence for the emancipation of women. And so in ethics, the notion of obligation —τὸ δέον—which is the root of the moral idea, no doubt exists in our nature. It is a form of the

mind: an attribute of human personality, conscious of self and non-self. "Justice," said the ancient jurists, is the constant and perpetual will to render to each his due—"constans et perpetua voluntas jus suum cuique tribuendi." The whole history of ethics is the history of the development of that idea. Even in our poor relations, the lower animals, respect for one another's rights is the best test of their progress.

TEMPERLEY. I don't know why you should say "even." Surely ethical phenomena, like physical and intellectual, may be generalized. The difference is vast between the various scales of being: but it is a difference of degree, not of kind. There is really only one animal. But, don't let me break in upon your argument.

LUXMOORE. Well, it will be better perhaps that I should not venture upon an excursion into the subject to which your words point, though the temptation is strong. I was saying that the moral progress of mankind, viewed as a whole, seems to me a palpable fact. It may be said that the great principles of ethics were as well known in the days of Moses, of Gotama, of Socrates, as in the days of Kant: that no real development of them is possible. But I say No: ethical ideas, like all others, have grown in the human mind. Think of the views held by Cato—that fine type of Roman excellence—regarding slavery. And then compare them with those of Wilberforce. Is there no growth there? I cite the first instance that occurs to me. I might give a hundred others. But

I go on to say that side by side with this unquestionable fact of moral progress there is another to me no less unquestionable. The religious idea is the indispensable guardian of the ethical, and the only source of its authority.

TEMPERLEY. Surely that is a strong statement.

GRIMSTON. And surely an untenable one. Were the antique cults—for example, the worship of Aphrodite and Priapus—guardians of any ethical idea? Mr. Swinburne, I remember, finds in the fact that they were not a reason for judging them superior to the "creeds that refuse and restrain" in the modern world.

LUXMOORE. You mistake me. I am by no means asserting that particular cults are essential to morality. I distinguish between religion and religions. I know well that there are ages of the world in which religion must be sought by the wise outside the popular worship: in which the devout soul may say, with Schiller:

> "Welche Religion ich bekenne? Keine von allen
> Die Du mir nennst. Und warum keine? aus Religion."

But my contention is that morality, in its highest and truest sense, is not merely a correct ethical taste, nor even a passion for right, nor an enthusiasm of humanity: still less a calculation of self-interest. A sanction is essential to it. The idea of obligation underlies it. Experience amply verifies the *dictum* of Kant: "Without a God and without a world

invisible to us now but hoped for, the glorious ideas of morality are, indeed, objects of admiration, but cannot be the springs of purpose and action." It seems to me to be clear from history that the moral idea has ever been most closely connected with the religious idea, which has vivified it and made it operative : more, that the two have been evolved together. The names which mark epochs for us in the history of religions are those of men to whom the great families of the human race have owed ethical conceptions at once enlarged and more imperative. Confucius, Gotama, Socrates, Mohammed, are all apostles of the moral law : and all insist upon its supersensible foundations. While to come to a greater name still, if we consider the work of Christianity in the sphere of ethics, what is it, in its essence, but this : that it has proclaimed the indefeasible supremacy of conscience as the voice of God within ? that it has indoctrinated the mind of the races of mankind that have received it with a belief that the highest good is to follow the monitions of this internal guide ? the supreme loss to disobey them ?

TEMPERLEY. I am quite with you, as I suppose ninety-nine sensible men out of a hundred would be, in admitting the fact of progress. And I am much pleased, if you will let me say so, with your tolerant tone about non-Christian religions. It reminds me of a remark made to me the other day by an excellent French Catholic—somewhat to my surprise : "Notre religion," the good man said, "est sans doute la seule

bonne: mais nous avons fait tant de mal par son moyen que quand nous parlons des autres, il faut être modestes." I could wish, indeed, that you had dwelt a little more upon the progress which has been made in the religious sphere. For example, consider the idea of Deity. Take the conception of God now generally prevalent in this country. It is perhaps true, as we have been lately told, that it leaves much to be desired: that it represents the Infinite and Eternal as "the head of the clerical interest: as a sort of clergyman: a sort of schoolmaster: a sort of philanthropist." Well, but that is a great advance upon the fetish of savage tribes or upon the Hebrew Jehovah, before whom Samuel hewed Agag in pieces, or upon the Deity honoured by the fiery rites of the Inquisition. I was reading the other day, in an old ecclesiastical history, how at the sack of Toulouse, during the crusade against the Albigenses, most of the inhabitants of the city having been put to the sword, a few hundreds were preserved from the common fate, in order that they might be burned alive to satisfy the piety of the pilgrims, who beheld the spectacle with immense delight—"cum ingenti gaudio"—the devout chronicler says. I take it that the religious instinct has now been educated to such a point throughout the civilized world as to make a return to such peculiar expressions of piety impossible. Even in Spain, the stronghold of sanguinary superstitions, there has not been an *auto da fé* for a century.

GRIMSTON. And to whom do we owe this curbing of fanaticism? To Voltaire more than to any one else.

LUXMOORE. "Messieurs, vous sortez de la question." I am not going to defend the Inquisition, or the civil legislation which gave such terrible effect to its judgments. A formal apology for both, logically sufficient, would be easy. But I prefer to say frankly, that, I believe a return to the stake as the guardian of religious uniformity impossible: and one reason why it is impossible is because we have advanced to a juster conception, in this respect, of the spirit of Christ than was possessed by our fathers. Voltaire, again, profoundly irreligious and inhuman as he was —I say inhuman, because of his tone about the common people—I quite allow to have been, in some respects, a minister of true progress. He exploded some lies: gave the death-blow to some cruelties: and opened fields of thought—as in history—which sounder thinkers have since fruitfully cultivated. And now, after this digression, shall we go back to our proper theme?

GRIMSTON. You trump our best cards. But to proceed. History, you contend, reveals a clear advance of our race in physical science, in social organization, in ethical and religious conceptions. But has this advance added to the greatest happiness of the greatest number? Happiness, you will object, is a vague word. Take it how you will. Say, if you like, "Virtue alone is happiness below." Do you think that there is more virtue in the world

now than there was a century, ten centuries, two thousand centuries, ago? I much doubt it. I incline to think the sum total of virtue and vice always pretty much the same. Or take happiness in the Benthamite sense of plenty of pig's wash. There is more pig's wash in the world, you say: much of it very savoury, and the average quality of the whole better. But what advantageth it to the rank and file of the herd? Progress? Yes: and, as Mr. George has been reminding us, Poverty. Think of the antinomies of civilization and industry. Consider the condition of the great majority of the populations of our large cities, aggravated, as it is, by the spectacle of senseless profusion daily flaunted in their faces. It has been said, and with simple truth, that our present state of society is in many respects one of the most horrible the world has ever known: boundless luxury and self-indulgence at one end of the scale: and at the other a condition of life as cruel as that of a Roman slave, and more degraded than that of a South Sea Islander. Contemporary history, like past history, if we take any but the most superficial view of it, is essentially tragedy,—as individual life is. Schopenhauer asks with great force, "Whence did Dante take the materials for his *Inferno* but from this actual world of ours? And yet he made a very proper hell of it." Optimism, when not mere thoughtless babble, is a wicked way of thinking: for it is a bitter mockery of the unspeakable suffering of humanity.

TEMPERLEY. Ohe jam satis! my dear Grimston. Don't give us any more Schopenhauer, please. The dark side of life, individual and collective, is only too evident. Who can doubt that there is a rift in the constitution of things? There is a terrible passage in de Maistre where he speaks of the earth as an immense altar, ever crying for the blood of man and beast. It is a probable hypothesis enough that history should be viewed as a vast expiation of some aboriginal fault. Plausible too is that other theory that Siva and Vishnu are merely different energies of the same power.

LUXMOORE. If any fact is unquestionable it is this of the abounding misery in the world. The creature is subject to vanity: is in the bondage of corruption. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together. Everywhere, in every age there is evil: within and without. The waste and ruin in history have their counterpart in the physical world and in the heart of man. The phenomenal is a vast outrage on the ideal. But in spite of immense drawbacks I think that the progress of our race, on the whole, is unquestionable: that the gradual evolution of humanity is a patent fact. Well, then, has this fact any meaning? Is there a normal working of things in the moral world as in the physical? Surely there is. I agree with Mr. Spencer—and it is always a pleasure to me to find myself in accord with so clear a thinker —"that good and bad results cannot be accidental, but must be the necessary consequences of the con-

stitution of things," and that "it is the business of moral science to deduce from the laws of life and the conditions of existence what kinds of actions tend to produce happiness, and what kinds to produce unhappiness." It seems to me that history teaches a moral lesson of the most tremendous kind: and that here its teaching is in unison with the teaching of the physical world.

TEMPERLEY. And so we get back to St. Augustine and his "two cities," I suppose.

LUXMOORE. We get back to the great thought which dominated the mind of St. Augustine, and which the whole advance of the human intellect from his day to our own has brought into clearer relief: the thought of the universal reign of law. As Music, Geometry, the movement of the stars, the necessary relations of numbers, speak to him of an universal order, and of One who has established it, so does the course of human history reveal One "qui profert numerose sæculum," who rules the "fluxum sæculorum ordinate turbulentum." It seemed to him impossible—he has unfolded the argument with singular beauty and skill in a well-known chapter of the "De Civitate"—that while order and design and harmony are impressed upon every minutest feature of the physical world, the course of human events, the vicissitudes of commonwealths, the rise and fall of empires, should have been left to irrational chance or blind fate. In the manifold striving and endeavour, travail and sorrow, of mankind, he delighted to see

"toil coöperant to an end." "Deus ordinem sæculorum tanquam pulcherrimum carmen ex quibusdam quasi antithetis honestavit," he finely says. And here, let me note in passing, he is the mouthpiece of an aspiration common to the race: the interpreter to itself of

> "the prophetic soul
> Of the wide world dreaming on things to come."

What is the magnificent myth of Prometheus, the great founder of civilization, who taught the Cave men the use of fire, numbers, and writing, nay, astronomy, medicine, navigation, divination, and who, bound to the rock and gnawed by the vulture, predicts the eventual fall of tyrannous Zeus and the triumph of justice—what is it but the embodiment of the thought of progress? What is that most beautiful eclogue of Virgil—the sweetest strain of the sweetest of singers—but a *fantasia* upon the same theme? The doctrine of Zoroaster—whatever may be obscure in it—clearly points to the ultimate triumph of light and truth, when, as we read in the *Zamyâd Yast*, the victorious Saoshyant and his helpers shall restore the world, which will thenceforth never grow old and never die, when life and immortality shall come and the Evil Principle shall perish. Even in India, dominated as it was by its fatalistic philosophy, there was the ideal, due, as Rhys Davids thinks, to reminiscences of Vedic thought, of the perfectly wise Man, the Buddha, who, when all flesh has corrupted its way upon earth,

appears and founds a Kingdom of Righteousness. But Christianity, unfolding a divine purpose which runs through the ages and culminates beyond time—Christianity, which has been truly called a transcendent theory of progress, has cast this ideal into the mould in which it has most potently affected mankind; how potently, who can say? Is not the belief in progress at this very time at the root of all that is most hopeful in the world? Catholics and Protestants, Jews and Freethinkers, Pantheists and Positivists, Mystics and Materialists—all acknowledge the influence of this idea. Even Mr. Cobden confessed its sway, and interpreted it of "a calico millennium." It is the source of all that is most excellent in all. If you could destroy it—but you cannot, for it is rooted in human nature—you would smite the earth with a curse far more terrible and appalling than any mankind has ever known. You ask me what history can teach us. Well, here is one lesson. History exhibits this thirst for perfection, this gradual moving upwards towards the attainment of it, as a chief note of the career of our race. Here, as in the rest of the universe, there is a never-ceasing process of evolution, a perpetual becoming. The plant, the animal, the man, the social order issuing from man —all display a progressive metamorphosis. In the physical world this striving after perfection seems to be blind, unintelligent: whether it is really so or not, I do not undertake to say. But in man it is certainly conscious: and the highest form of it is the

religious sentiment which is a feeling after the Infinite. Supreme truth alone can satisfy the intellect: supreme love alone can fill the heart: supreme righteousness alone can content the conscience. But when we say Supreme Truth, Supreme Love, Supreme Righteousness, we say GOD. It is under the influence of this transcendent ideal that the human soul reaches its amplest development, its highest elevation in the scale of being: and Jesus Christ has given us its noblest and simplest expression, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." The first great lesson that history teaches us, from the collected experiences of our race, is that man lives under the law of progress which is the striving after perfection, and of which the highest expression is the quest of the All Perfect. "Fecisti nos ad Te," says St. Augustine. And history justifies his saying.

GRIMSTON. Von Hartmann, you know, considers this notion of progress an illusion, and he has formulated its three stages. In the antique world it took the shape of happiness for the individual in the present scene: in the Middle Ages, of a vague beatitude in an imaginary heaven: the modern version of it is, apparently, the perfection of the species in an indefinite future.

TEMPERLEY. I incline to think the ancient conception is still pretty largely held. Certainly most of my acquaintances, whatever their professions, resemble in their practice that dear old French lady,

"qui pour plus de sureté
Fit son paradis dans ce monde."

But we check our friend's eloquence. His exposition is by no means done. Pray forgive us, my dear Luxmoore, and proceed, please.

LUXMOORE. I would say that as St. Augustine has discerned, however dimly and imperfectly, this great fact of progress and the main lesson which it teaches, so he has rightly apprehended its condition—obedience to law, the innermost essence of things, which, in Hooker's fine phrase, is "the very voice of God." Man may obey or disobey this law—that is his awful and mysterious prerogative. But to follow it is the only condition of advance, of freedom, according to the old saying, "Summa Deo servitus, summa libertas." It is by conformity to the laws of the external world, by virile energy—virtue, in a true sense—that the human race has so wonderfully subdued physical forces, and made them our servants. It is by obedience to the laws of human nature that man has ameliorated his social condition. His ethical advance—the most important element of his progress—is due to his following the dictates of Eternal Righteousness. That civilization is nothing else but the knowledge and observance of natural laws is the stupidest of lies. Its elements are chiefly moral. Intellect is but its instrument. I know well that this truth has been for a season obscured by the school, or rather schools, of writers who set aside virtue, benevolence, love of God, of country, and hold out

physical science as the sole factor of human progress. But it is true all the same: the first of truths: and I have no fear but that it will be so recognized when the brief hour of materialistic tyranny is overpast, for the world cannot live without it. I hold with Butler that "the law of virtue, written on our hearts, is the law we are born under," and that in obedience to it is the condition of all well-being, as for individuals so for nations. Machiavelli was right when he said that the majestic fabric of the Roman Commonwealth was built up rather by virtue than by arms. He, too, was right who said of the First Napoleon at the height of his success—"It is unjust: it cannot last." What is commonly called the force of circumstance is only another name for eternal law: for that adamantine chain of moral gravitation which we cannot formulate —ἄγραφος the Greeks well termed it—but from which we can no more escape than from its counterpart in the physical world. As in the history of the individual, so in the history of nations, God is primarily revealed under the attribute of Retributive Justice. The first fact about man is his concept of duty: "Thou Oughtest: it is thy supreme good to follow that Categorical Imperative: thy supreme loss to disobey it." And this is the first fact, too, about the aggregation of men which we call a people. In loyalty to truth, to right, to justice—all summed up in the old phrase of fearing God—is the highest law of collective human life, and it is fenced round with terrible penalties which are the natural sequence of

its violation. The root of all greatness, national or individual, is a great thought: or a great action, which is merely a great thought actualized. The ideal is the moral life of the world. But the highest of all ideas is the Divine. And it is precisely as that idea has lived in the minds of peoples that they have been truly great. Piety towards the gods was the very root of Roman greatness. No truer word was ever said than Horace's, "Dis te minorem quod geris, imperas:" read Fustel de Coulanges' chapter *Le Romain* if you would know how true it is. Consider the mediæval period, rude in physical comfort and the mechanic arts, but how great in individualities, in men: think of its monuments which still remain to us: cathedrals, such as those of Siena, Amiens, Canterbury; the pictures of Giotto, Orcagna, Fra Angelico: the song of Dante: the philosophy of Aquinas. All that was great in those ages sprang from their faith: from the divine ideal on which they lived. Or look at England or the United States in this nineteenth century. In the old Puritan beliefs which still maintain their hold over the popular mind is the salt which keeps society from dissolution. And then turn your eyes on France, which a century ago solemnly installed concupiscence—aptly typified by the Goddess of Reason—in the place of conscience, and elevated the dumb buzzard idol, Man in the abstract, and his fictitious rights, in the place of the living God, and the duties binding upon us because He is what He is: look at France, I say, if you would see an example of

the hell which a people prepares for itself when it maketh and loveth a lie. I know the country well: and every time I visit it I discern terrible evidence of ever-increasing degeneracy. The man seems to be disappearing. There is a return to the simious type. The eye speaks of nothing but dull esuriency. The whole face is prurient. The voice has lost the virile ring and has become shrill, gibberish, baboon-like. Go into the Chamber of Deputies, the chosen and too true representatives of the people. The looks, the gestures, the cries, remind you irresistibly of the monkey-house in Regent's Park. The nation—for it must be judged by its public acts—has for a hundred years been trying to rid itself of the perception which is the proper attribute of man: to cast out the idea of God, which Michelet has well called the progressive and conservative principle of civilization: to live on a philosophy of animalism: and it is rapidly losing all that is distinctively human, and is sinking below the level of the animals.

> "Stern and imperious Nemesis,
> Daughter of Justice, most severe
> Thou art the world's great arbitress
> And Queen of causes reigning here,
> Whose swift-sure hand is ever near."

GRIMSTON. I confess France seems to me to be going back to a state of nature, not as that delirious charlatan Rousseau deemed of it—"ce polisson de Jean-Jacques," Voltaire called him: for my own part, I think it a nice point whether he was more black-

guard or madman—but as it really existed when men first crawled forth on the earth, "mutum et turpe pecus," and fought tooth and nail for acorns and sleeping-places, and other things that shall be nameless. You may read it all in your favourite Horace, who has anticipated the very latest scientific views of human origin. But to keep to our theme, you say that history reveals God primarily to you as an Avenger wroth with the work of His own hands. But why have called the human race into existence, with all its errors and crimes, only to punish it?

LUXMOORE. Not "only." To reward and to punish. As for your Why, it is the idlest of questions. What is clear to me, as it was to Schiller, is that the history of the world is the judgment of the world. Before nations, as before individuals, are set life and death, blessing and cursing. Their well-being depends upon their choice:

> "Our acts our angels are, or good or ill,
> Our fatal shadows that walk by us still."

We are thrown back upon free-will. You shake your head; you call it a *non ens*. To me it is the first of facts, and rests upon the strongest of evidence, the testimony of consciousness which, if it tells me anything, tells me that. I say that this is to me the first fact of individual life: and a nation is primarily an aggregation of individuals. I do not say that it is merely that. It is an organism, a corporate entity, all its parts interdependently bound, and with powers,

attributes, characteristics, of its own. Still Mr. Spencer speaks most truly when he tells us that the welfare of a society and the justice of its arrangements are, at bottom, dependent upon the character of its members. I must agree with him—it is self-evident—that social phenomena have their roots in the phenomena of individual life, and those again in general vital phenomena. National spirit is, in the last resort, the spirit of the individuals composing the nations. The development of mankind is the development of the men who make up mankind. The qualities which are distinctive of any people, which inform its laws and determine its policy, and are reflected in its institutions and are expressed in its manners, are the qualities of the persons who compose the people. Here too the last word is personality.

GRIMSTON. It is a good mouth-filling word. But what do you mean by it?

LUXMOORE. Well, I have no pocket definition to offer you. Indeed, in strictness, I do not think personality can be defined: by its very nature it seems to me to be incapable of expression in phenomenal symbols. Personality is the human thing in itself: it is in its essence transcendental. I can no more define it for you than I can define reason or beauty or God. But we may know, feel, and believe what we cannot shut up in a formula. Comprehension is one thing. Apprehension, another.

GRIMSTON. But before we rest upon personality we ought to be quite sure that it is something more

than an empty word. I came upon an argument the other day, in a book of Mr. Samuel Butler's, which struck me as very ingenious, and which I will present to you, but in language more decorous than his, for he uses great plainness of speech. It is this: The man of eighty is held to be personally identical with the new-born infant, out of whom he has been developed. But the new-born infant is certainly identical with the infant before birth, and this too must be thought identically the same in all stages of its embryonic existence, till we arrive at the elementary living cell to which science traces the human and every other organism. For "omne vivum ex ovo." But that bioplasm or protoplasm has itself a history: it is not one element, but two, which are at first severally identical with the individual organisms whence they were derived: in other words, with the distinct personalities of which their child is the offspring. Thus may he claim a personal identity with both his parents: nor can it be denied, without violating first principles, that he is, physically and organically, as much a part of them as the apple blossom is of the apple tree. If ever he *was* one with them, it follows that he *is* one with them. In like manner, by an easy chain of reasoning, we reach the conclusion that he is personally identical with all his ancestors: and finally with the individual bioplastic cell in which the whole race was summed up and lay hidden, and out of which all its innumerable representatives have been unfolded. All the blossoms are one with and in the

apple tree: so are all men identified with the one human race, which is nothing but a long-lived individual. And those marvellous instances of heredity which we see in man, but still more clearly in the lower animals, he explains, reasonably enough, as mere manifestations of unconscious memory. A duck hatched by the hen makes straight for the water. Why? Because it remembers what it did when it was one individuality with its parents, and when it was a duckling before. An old piece of wolf-skin is set before a little dog who has never seen a wolf, and he is thrown into convulsions of fear by the slight smell attaching to it. Why? Because the skin brings up the ideas with which it had been associated in the dog's mind during his previous existences, so that on smelling it he remembers all about wolves perfectly well.

TEMPERLEY. I am not acquainted with Mr. Butler's writings, but his doctrine seems to present some analogy to that of Schopenhauer, who holds that the begotten and the begetter, though phenomenally different, are in themselves—according to the idea—identical; that the true person is the species, not the individual. But what does our friend Luxmoore say to this?

LUXMOORE. I incline to say to Mr. Samuel Butler, with Sganarelle: "Je ne sais que dire car vous tournez les choses d'une manière qu'il me semble que vous avez raison: et cependent il est vrai que vous ne l'avez pas." The ultimate appeal is to conscious-

ness, which testifies to the distinction between self and non-self: which declares to me that in some wonderful sense I stand alone: weighted with duties, fenced round with responsibilities, endowed with choice. Mr. Butler's ingenious theory no doubt has a true side; it points to facts inconsistent with what, to use a Buddhist phrase, I may call "the heresy of individuality," the political embodiment of which is the Jacobin doctrine of the sovereignty of the individual: a doctrine pungently and truly described by M. Renan as applicable only to a state of society in which men should be born foundlings and die bachelors. No: the individual does not stand alone: the solidarity of races, of nations, of families, is a great truth.

GRIMSTON. But how reconcile it with that other doctrine of individual responsibility?

LUXMOORE. Frankly, I do not know: but my inability to reconcile two truths is no reason for my denying either or both. The proverb concerning the land of Israel, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge," was true; and the divine word which came by the prophet, "I will judge every one according to his ways," is true also. Unquestionably a nation's wrongdoing is visited on the third and fourth generation. What man whose moral sense is not hopelessly blunted can doubt the heavy penalty which has still to be paid by England for her centuries of tyrannous oppression and senseless cruelty in Ireland? It is with collective

as with single human life. The offspring of the just man reaps the reward, both in his physical and moral constitution, of his father's virtue: "fortes creantur fortibus." Gout, consumption, scrofula, are among the penalties we pay for our ancestors' contempt of the laws of right living. Quinet has well remarked that adulterine children usually manifest in their lives the fraud and dishonour in which they are engendered: "Delicta majorum immeritus lues." The parallelism between the individual and the corporate organism which might be established in so many other ways holds good in this also, that both are under the moral law. Progress, advance towards perfection, is the reward of obedience to it: degradation, retrogression in the scale of being, the penalty of resistance.

TEMPERLEY. I suppose we must all agree that the question, What is the significance of history? depends upon another, What is the significance of human life?

LUXMOORE. Unquestionably. I think that history may be truly described as the simultaneous evolution of the individual and of the social order in which is the individual's normal place. But I will go on still further, if you will let me. I said just now that the root of all greatness, national or individual, seemed to me to be a great thought or a great action, which is a great thought actualized. But of these great thoughts, great men are the founts. I fully agree with Mr. Carlyle—it seems to me the most valuable lesson he taught—that "universal history, the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is, at

the bottom, the history of the great men who have worked here:" that all "things which we see standing in this world are, properly, the outward material result, the practical realization and embodiment of thoughts that dwelt in the great men sent into the world." I go further. I find, as I investigate the annals of our race, that from time to time Saints, Sages, and Heroes have risen up to place before men ideals; and that men, drawn by the instinct which leads us to recognize something divine in greatness, have more or less followed those ideals, and by that following have been elevated in the scale of being. Yes: the history of the world is the judgment of the world, as Schiller said. The trial of men lies, for the most part, in the readiness with which they receive, and the loyalty with which they follow, the ideals set before them: or, if I may so express it, the Revelations made at sundry times and in divers manners by the Prophets of the Most High. That man, by a necessity of his nature, strives after perfection, that obedience to law, universal and divine, is the condition of perfection, that the great men sent into the world from time to time are the preachers of that law—these are the three great facts which seem to me to be writ large in history. And the third, like the other two, witnesses for God. Consider the ordinary human biped as he lives and moves and has his being in London, in Bagdad, in Pekin, in Ava. Follow him through his twenty-four hours of work or amusement, of eating, digestion, and sleep. What is it that

makes him something more than matter in movement? The influence of some great idea, some true thought, coming to him from Jesus Christ, from Mohammed, from Confucius, from Gotama that has mainly formed the spiritual atmosphere which he breathes, and by which, unconsciously, his moral being lives. And this holds good of the freest freethinker as of the most ardent believer. M. Renan speaks the simple truth when he says, "Chacun de nous doit à Jésus ce qu'il y a de meilleur en lui." His confession, "Au fond je sens que ma vie est gouvernée par une foi que je n'ai plus," is as true of modern civilization as of his individual self. What fact is more extraordinary, more miraculous in the true sense of the word, than this: that three short years of one human life, led, two thousand years ago, in an obscure corner of Asia, should have sent forth an influence which has changed the face of the Western world, and which is still as strong as ever—as strong, or stronger? The personality of Jesus Christ, a poor unlettered peasant whose dolorous career was cut short by a cruel and infamous death, is at this moment the most potent force in the world.

TEMPERLEY. Yes. "Ça donne à penser."

GRIMSTON. And so we end in the great-man theory. You have parted company with Mr. Herbert Spencer.

LUXMOORE. Unfortunately, Mr. Spencer subordinates mind to matter, character to environment: hence he is necessarily led to the extremest sensationalism.

GRIMSTON. I have taken down his *Study of Sociology*. What do you say to this passage?—"Before the great man can remake his society, his society must make him. So that all those changes of which he is the proximate initiator have their chief causes in the generations he descends from. If there be anything like a real explanation of these changes it must be sought in the conditions out of which both he and they have come."

LUXMOORE. Mr. Spencer's doctrine, as I understand it, is, that it was not the great men sent into the world who moulded circumstances, but circumstances which made and fashioned them: that their thoughts were nothing but the result of structure: their minds a mere attribute of their material substance: that to the philosophic eye they are nothing but an aggregate of conditions. I do not know anything which more forcibly illustrates the truth of Lord Bacon's hackneyed *dictum*: "Qui Deos esse negant, nobilitatem generis humani destruunt."

TEMPERLEY. Mr. Spencer would not consider that a fatal objection, probably.

LUXMOORE. I dare say he would deny that it is in logic a sound argument. But, in truth, it is an appeal to the final Court of the scientific, as of the unscientific, judgment: to consciousness which declares that man is something more than an automaton. Let us, however, look at Mr. Spencer's view a little more closely. Upon what is it really founded? Does it not rest upon the abstract and quite fallacious

assumption, so potent in the minds of men since Rousseau gave it such wide currency, that the world is peopled by an infinity of units, alike not merely in their nature, which I am far from denying, but in their individual share of the gifts of Nature: equal in degree, because resembling one another in kind: all in their origin equally endowed and starting fair in the race for pre-eminence? Surely this cannot be granted by the latest philosophy any more than by the oldest: nay, not so much, for the survival of the fittest implies that all do not start equal. Let us keep to the facts. The commonest experience of actual life is enough to show us that, given the same aggregate of conditions, we cannot be confident, whether as regards the individual or society, that the same results will follow. The science of sociology has by no means got so far as this. It cannot show us even that twins will be marked by the same spiritual characteristics, or will be alike in mind, because subject to "the same aggregate of conditions" in their origin. I quite admit that the conceptions by which any historical personality becomes conscious of the facts of its own times are those in which the thought of the age in general finds expression. But it is quite another thing to say that in the antecedents and environment of such a personality we have a complete explanation of it. Is it possible, if we weigh the matter well, to refer "the vision and the faculty divine" of a great poet to merely external causes? or to account for it by talking of inherited

predispositions, when, from the millions of past generations, there arises one Virgil, one Dante, one Goethe? Take, again, that great stream of enthusiasm which, ever and anon, we see welling up from a single man, and bearing, irresistibly, before it whole generations until its force is spent. Can we believe that it arose, as from its fountain-head, from any "aggregate of conditions," and was logically and mathematically deducible from a state of society which, instead of continuing, it ended?

TEMPERLEY. I remember a passage of your friend Carlyle which may be worth quoting perhaps. "The great man was the 'creature of the Time,' they say: the Time called him forth: the Time did everything: he nothing, but what we, the little critic, could have done too! This seems to me but melancholy work. The Time call forth? Alas, we have known Times *call* loudly enough for their great man; but not find him when they called! He was not there. Providence had not sent him: the Time *calling* its loudest had to go down to confusion and wreck, because he would not come when called."

LUXMOORE. Carlyle never said anything better: and he said many things excellently well. For my part—to sum up my argument—I hold that there are in man "abysmal depths of personality," which no plummet of physical science has ever sounded, or ever will sound: that it is the perception of the ideal and the power to express it, rooted in the very essence of our nature, which makes us self-conscious and self-

determined: and that great men are the source and fount of ideas, the figures which alone give historic meaning and value to the ciphers—"numeri, fruges consumere nati"—as which we must account the vast majority of mankind. Those mighty spirits who rule us from their urns were, indeed, as other men, subject to the laws of time and matter: but not wholly subject: their thought, their energy, their action, their suffering, have wrought wonders beyond time and matter, and the effects of mechanical force, how subtle soever: and their lives, taken simply as evidence, might furnish foundations for grander spiritual philosophies—transcending, not denying, the truths of the physical universe—than the world has yet dared to formulate. But that is too large a subject.

GRIMSTON. Let us go back to Mr. Spencer's book. He writes: "If, not stopping at the explanation of social problems, as due to the great man, we go a step further, and ask, Whence comes the great man? the question has two conceivable answers: his origin is supernatural, or it is natural. Is his origin supernatural? then he is a demigod: and we have theocracy once removed, or rather not removed at all."

LUXMOORE. Well, what is the harm of that? Why should we not have theocracy if we can get it? The word demigod is out of fashion. I have no wish to bring it back. Still, it might serve, for want of a better, to characterize one who is marked off from his fellows of the race of men by what Cicero terms "magna et divina bona:" great and divine endow-

ments: which are distinct from temperament, from environment, from evolution, from heredity: which you cannot tie up in a formula nor explain by analysis: and as the highest and rarest of which we must reckon a true, an original thought, well denominated by Krause *Schauen* vision intuition. But vision, intuition of what? Of Him who is the Truth, of whom all truth is part.

TEMPERLEY. Mr. Spencer is right then. And you land us in full supernaturalism.

LUXMOORE. The words Natural and Supernatural have an invariable meaning in scientific theology, where they are employed to distinguish the "Order of Nature" from the "Order of Grace," and are antithetical, though not incompatible in the same act or faculty. Modern literature and metaphysics, overlooking or not knowing this distinction, identify the Natural, now with the Material, and now with the Orderly. From which it follows that the Supernatural sometimes signifies no more than the Hyperphysical, and sometimes, as I suspect in the passage which our friend has quoted from Mr. Spencer, no less than the Irrational. Its meaning should never be taken on trust. If by Natural Mr. Spencer means subject simply to the laws of matter, and resulting merely from material antecedents, then I deny that the origin of the great man is natural, for the origin of no man is:

"Est Deus in nobis; agitante calescimus illo:"

"We also are His offspring." But if by Natural he means what Butler—wrongly, as I think—accounts its only meaning, namely, "stated, fixed, or settled," then, since the great man appears according to a fixed plan of Divine Providence, his origin may, in this sense, be deemed natural. All is upon this supposition natural, if history, notwithstanding the abounding sin of man, which is to me one of the most palpable facts in it, be a drama, wherein all the movement is done in fulfilment of the will of the Highest: Διὸς δ' ἐτελείετο βουλή. All is supernatural if, by a perversion of terms, the presence and action of the Creator in His creation be called supernatural. From Him, and by Him, and of Him are all things, and in all things is He revealed: in the external world by the beauty which is the dim adumbration of His perfect loveliness: in the heart of man by the voice of conscience, His perpetual witness and indefeasible priest: in history by those great souls who from time to time light up the world's dreary and ignoble *fasti*, and whom our forefathers by a true instinct—let us not hesitate to say it—called Divine men.

GRIMSTON. Your doctrine seems to have much in common with Bunsen's: that personality, which he regards as divine self-manifestation, is "the lever of the world's history." Well, Christian Charles Josiah von Bunsen was a good man.

TEMPERLEY. Don't call him "a good man." He was better than that. Whatever we may think of

his philosophy of history, we must allow that his was a singularly comprehensive and well-disciplined intellect, loyally devoted to the service of truth. His breadth of thought stands out conspicuously if you compare him with the two writers of whom we have just been talking: Carlyle and Herbert Spencer.

GRIMSTON. Carlyle and Herbert Spencer. You remind me of a good story, which has not yet found its way into print, I think. A man who numbered among his acquaintance those two eminent persons was anxious that his son, an undergraduate at Oxford, should be introduced to them. So one day he took the youth to call on Mr. Spencer, and as they were departing he said, "We are going on to see Mr. Carlyle." "Ah, Mr. Carlyle," Mr. Spencer is reported to have replied: "I am afraid he has done more to propagate error than any other writer of the century." Nothing daunted, they made their pilgrimage to Chelsea, and when their interview with the sage of Cheyne Walk came to an end the father observed: "This will be a day for my boy to look back upon, Mr. Carlyle: for in it he has been introduced to two great men: yourself and Mr. Herbert Spencer." "Herbert Spencer, Herbert Spencer, an im-mea-surable ass," was the response of the oracle.

LUXMOORE. "Immeasurable!" Carlyle had a *curiosa felicitas* in his epithets. Still he might have learnt a great deal from Mr. Spencer.

TEMPERLEY. But not about his great-man theory, you think?

LUXMOORE. No: that theory seems to me to be defective: but to complete it Carlyle should have gone to quite another school than Mr. Spencer's. It is true as to its foundation, but it wants to be moralized.

TEMPERLEY. How "moralized"? Carlyle certainly had an intensely strong feeling of ethical law. He conceived of God, so far as I can understand, as the personification of that law.

LUXMOORE. That is so. But his doctrine of great men I think defective, in that it fails to inculcate this verity—that they are authoritative teachers only so far as they follow the divine illumination in them: in other words, so far as they are ethical: so far as they correspond with the truth of things: so far and no further. You know the saying of Butler: "If conscience had power as it has authority, it would govern the world." It is the supreme authority—for it is divine—which ought to govern, and which, in effect, does in the long run govern. Great men interpret the law of the universe, which is the law of God and therefore the perfection of ethics, more clearly than others, because they discern it, in one province or another, by the intuition of genius, which is inspiration. All truth is part of God: all knowledge is knowledge of God: and He alone is the light which illumines our minds. A man is great so far as he walks in that light. Hence you may truly call a great man the Categorical Imperative individualized.

GRIMSTON. Most edifying: although, perhaps,

merely a copy-book maxim in fine words. But is it true? Do you call Goethe the Categorical Imperative individualized?

LUXMOORE. You could not have chosen a better example to illustrate my meaning. Goethe's great endowment was his marvellous vision in certain intellectual provinces, and his absolute veracity. He sees things as they are, and he paints them as they are. Carlyle well says, "The word that will describe the thing follows of itself from such clear intense insight of the thing." He had, in a supreme degree, the morality of the intellect. And his power lies there. Outside that sphere who looks up to him as a teacher? You ask a great man, "What do you see?" And he tells you. He may say—as the Greatest said—"I bear testimony of myself, and my testimony is true." It is of no use to consult him about matters which he does *not* see. You would not go to St. John Baptist for a theory of *Bildung*, nor to Goethe for the doctrine of sexual purity.

TEMPERLEY. Your general conclusion, then—for I must go—would seem to be a kind of union of idealistic optimism and realistic pessimism. You too have your Utopia: and the way to it for the race, as for the individual, you declare to be the way of Virtue. Kant's Categorical Imperative, on which you insist so much, may, I take it, be considered as an awkward wooden signpost announcing as much to a belated nineteenth century—To Eldorado. And shrivelled-up,

staring-eyed old Kant is the appointed watchman, taking toll of every passenger, and giving change in kreutzers and rix dollars!

LUXMOORE. That is your light way of putting it. But it is true. "Adveniat regnum tuum," we say daily: at least I do. The first law of that interior kingdom is righteousness. And the great lesson deducible from history seems to me to enforce it: "Discite justitiam moniti."

GRIMSTON. It will be much if that law will stand in the breaking up of religious beliefs and "universal exodus from Houndsditch"—what a grand phrase—which is just now taking place. But will it? I am afraid, my dear Luxmoore, that you will be "vox clamantis in deserto"—like your St. John Baptist.

TEMPERLEY. But happily with this difference: that our milder-mannered Herods and Herodiases won't cut off your head. The extremest penalty with which they will visit you will be—not to buy your book. "Absit omen!"

CHAPTERS IN EUROPEAN HISTORY.

CHAPTER I.

THE CHRISTIAN REVOLUTION.

It is a significant fact that the Western World still regulates its chronology by "the year of our Lord," thereby offering testimony, not the less emphatic because it is largely unconscious, to the supreme importance of Christianity in the annals of mankind. The birth of Jesus Christ in an obscure hamlet of Judæa, nearly nineteen centuries ago, is the event to which, as a matter of fact, and apart from all theories about Him, must be traced the greatest of Revolutions. It is perfectly true that it has long been the fashion to overrate the extent of that Revolution, both geographically and spiritually. Christianity has been popularly said to have subdued the world; whereas it is only a small part of the human race that has received it in any form. It has been said to have revealed to men the knowledge of God and to have "brought life and immortality to light":

[1] A mistranslation of the *Authorized Version;* the rendering of

whereas it is indubitable that the existence of a Power external to man and divine, the sacredness of duty, and the possibility or certainty of life and retribution beyond the grave, were realized and proclaimed by many earlier systems of philosophy and religion. Still, admitting this, and much else which might be justly urged to the same effect, we may yet safely agree with a distinguished writer of our own day, not likely to exaggerate the claims of the religion of Jesus Christ, when he speaks of it as "ce fait fécond, unique, grandiose qui s'appelle Christianisme." Christianity, for more than a thousand years, has fashioned the thoughts, the beliefs, the aspirations, of the foremost races of mankind. It has done more than anything else to shape the current of European history, and of the history of the world. Thus much, no competent authority of any school will deny, whatever may be his own individual views or feelings about it. I propose to inquire how, as a matter of fact, Christianity has done this; to consider what the chief notes of the Christian Revolution are; and so to endeavour to seize and exhibit its inner meaning, as a movement of thought and a determining factor in the career of humanity.

It will, as I apprehend, be admitted by well-nigh all who read these words of mine, that Jesus Christ,

the *Vulgate*, "illuminavit autem vitam et incorruptionem per Evangelium," is more accurate.

whatever may be our private thoughts about Him and His work, and whether or no we find a sufficient explanation of Him in any "aggregate of conditions," is the greatest figure in the world's history: a Teacher quite unique among those who have placed human life and human aspirations upon a higher level. Hence it is, that a well-marked class of minds, confined to no one school, have ever delighted to regard Him as the supreme expression of Divine Thought. Thus the author of the fourth Gospel: "The Word was made Flesh and dwelt among us." And so Spinoza: "Æterna sapientia sese in omnibus rebus, maxime in humana mente, omnium maxime in Christo Jesu manifestavit." [1] Putting aside, then, for the moment all theological theories about the Person and teachings of the Prophet of Nazareth, let us inquire, what was the ideal which He set before the world? He Himself spake of the fire which He had come to bring upon earth. What was the divine spark which kindled it? Whatever view we may take as to the date, authorship, or authority of the documents that make up the New Testament, it is incontestable that eighteen hundred years ago a Teacher lived among the green hills and clear streams of Galilee, and gathered around Him a little band of disciples, for the most part humble and unlettered men, who gained their bread by daily toil: that His life of poverty, humility, and detachment from family ties was spent in inculcating

[1] *Ep.* xxi. 4. So in the *Ethic* he speaks of "Spiritus Christi, hoc est Dei idea."

religious and ethical doctrine, and was crowned by an ignominious death; that His influence did not die with Him: nay, that it was vastly enhanced after His departure from the scene of His ministry: so that, according to His own word, His followers did greater works than Himself; works which are not bygone but are with us, fruitfully operant unto this day. Now what was His teaching? About its essential character there can be no question at all.[1]

[1] The question being, "What did Christ teach?" there are three sources of evidence, differing in value, according to their acknowledged nearness to the time of His teaching. These are the Church, the Gospels, the Epistles; and all three agree in the points of His teaching upon which I am now insisting. Next, as to their relative worth. The Church represented by Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tertullian, Hippolytus, and in some degree by Origen and Clement of Alexandria, gives us the view of Christ's doctrine which was accepted by the great body of His followers about the year A.D. 200. The Gospels, even if we take our stand with the most extreme criticism, show what was held between A.D. 150 and A.D. 100. But the Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians, Galatians, Romans, and Corinthians, the First Epistle of St. Peter, the Epistle of St. James, and the *Apocalypse*—all authentic beyond controversy—enable us to get back within a short generation from our Lord's death; certainly as far back as A.D. 60. As much must be said of the Acts of the Apostles, so far as they are contemporary with St. Paul. Again, it cannot be doubted that not only the λόγια, but the main incidents of the Divine Life, were at the earliest date embodied in fixed oral traditions or catecheses with which our present Gospels stand in the closest connection, so that we are not reduced to the study of such fragmentary documents as are left when criticism has done its worst upon the Gospels. We are still in possession of St. Paul's unquestioned writings; we still have the *Apocalypse*, the First Epistle of St. Peter, and the Epistle of St. James. Out of these, and even out of the two Epistles last mentioned, it is easy to construct a doctrine which the Gospels only

Thus it is clear that the fatherhood of God—not the God merely of the Hebrews, but of all the families of the earth, unto whom all live—was the first and dominant thought that breathed through His discourses. This doctrine, I say, of the filial relationship of man to God, of the affinity of the better side of human nature with the Divine, was the fount from which His moral and religious teaching flowed. Injuries are to be forgiven. Why? Because, "if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive your trespasses." Enemies are to be loved; those who curse are to be blessed; those who hate, to be benefited; those who persecute, to be prayed for. Why? That ye may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven, for He maketh His sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. Perfection is to be aimed at. Why? Because your Father which is in Heaven is perfect. Solicitude

enlarge, and do not in any degree modify. St. Paul is not, indeed, a direct witness for Christ, nor must we forget that he remained a Jewish theologian, even when he was commenting on the Sermon on the Mount; nevertheless, we can trace in him the Christian teaching, though dealt with in a subtle spirit, and from an axiomatic mysticism become a theology. Thus we may view the *Gospel* at a distance of twenty years, instead of a hundred or a hundred and fifty, from the events which it relates. This has been completely forgotten by modern critics. It follows, of course, that when we have gained such a near standpoint, we can argue not only for the *Gospel*, but the *Gospels;* since their incomparable freshness and fulness are strong evidence that what they incorporate is not a somewhat worn tradition, but the very speech of Christ upon the lips of His first disciples.

about the necessities of life is condemned. Why? Because your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. He feedeth the fowls of the air; are ye not much better than they? He arrayeth the lilies of the field, as Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed; shall He not much more clothe you? Continuance in prayer is enjoined. Why? Because if ye being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father, which is in Heaven, give good things unto them that ask Him? Purity of intention is prescribed. Why? Because your Father seeth in secret. This is the first great note of the teaching of Jesus Christ. The ethical precepts delivered by Him contain little or nothing that was novel in the world, or to which the unassisted reason of mankind might not attain. It has been said, and I believe truly, that there is not one of them which might not be paralleled from the maxims of the earlier Rabbis. But what is new in the Evangelical teaching is the sanction on which it rests those precepts, the supernatural motive which it imparts for right action. I do not, of course, mean that the conception of the Fatherhood of God was new. What I mean is, that it was presented by Jesus Christ in, if I may so speak, a new light, and from a mere abstract doctrine was changed into a living and life-giving principle of conduct.

Such, then, was the first great note of the teaching of Christ: the exhibition of the Divine Paternity as a vital reality and the first of realities. The second, no

less clear and unmistakable, is His proclamation of Himself as a Teacher come from God in a very special and unique sense; as the way to God, by virtue of a Divine Sonship and the indwelling in Himself of the Divinity;[1] as the Deliverer of men from the tyranny of that lower self, whereby they were held back from the Supreme Good: as the Healer of human nature lying wounded and half dead, and unable to take one step forward towards its true country, which is God. The claims which He made for Himself not only transcend in degree those of any other prophet, of any other founder of a religion, but are different in kind. And unquestionably those claims were both the grounds of His condemnation and execution, and the cause of the marvellous triumphs of His faith. Here we are in the region, not of conjecture, but of fact. What was it which, so to speak, *made* the Christian Church? It was assuredly no system or theory, most assuredly no exhibition of thaumaturgic power, which attracted men to Jesus Christ, but the irresistible influence of soul upon soul. And to those who forsook all, and took up their cross and followed

[1] M. Renan has pointed out, truly enough, that the popular mind in Judæa was prepared for such a declaration, and was not likely to be shocked by it. "La croyance que certains hommes sont des incarnations de facultés ou de puissances divines était répandue; les Samaritains possédaient vers le même temps un thaumaturge nommé Simon qu'on identifait avec la grande vertu de Dieu. Depuis près de deux siècles les esprits speculatifs du judaïsme se laisaient aller au penchant de faire des personnes distinctes avec les attributs divins ou avec certaines expressions qu'on rapportait à la divinité."—*Vie de Jésus*, p. 248.

Him—such renunciation, such self-devotion, He warned them, were the very conditions of His discipleship—He exhibited no set of doctrines, no code of laws, but Himself, as being, in very deed, that Truth which is the supreme desire of the soul. Daily to converse with the Master, ever to ponder His words and His deeds, gradually to drink into His mind, to wean the heart from all earthly affection, even the tenderest and the purest, until it could be said: "I live, and yet not I, but Christ that liveth in me"—this was the spiritual discipline undergone by His scholars in the desert, or on the mountain, or by the lake. And when the Cross had taught the supreme lesson of sacrifice, of humiliation, of self-consuming charity, and the disciples went everywhere preaching the Word, the lesson which they taught was precisely that which they had learnt. "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord," is the testimony of one of them: and it is applicable to all. The Gospel which, as St. Paul reminds the Corinthians, he delivered to them, which they also received, and wherein they stood, and by which they were saved, was no catalogue of dogmas, but the manifestation of a Person in whom the eternally ideal had become the historically real, and who claimed for Himself the heart of man, to reign there as in His proper throne.[1] And every record of the Apostolic age bears witness that this

[1] "Dilectus tuus talis est naturæ, ut alienum non velit admittere, sed solus vult cor tuum habere, et tanquam rex in proprio throno sedere."—*De Imitatione Christi*, l. ii. c. 7.

was the message which was everywhere proclaimed. Do not let us shut our eyes to a plain fact of history. It was no doctrine of sweetness and light, no enthusiasm of humanity, but the Person of Jesus Christ, at once human and divine, which, as they gazed upon it, uplifted on the cross, smote down in masterful contrition the orthodox Pharisee and the Sadducean materialist of decadent Judæa, the agnostic philosopher of captive Greece, the stately magistrate and the rude soldier of Imperial Rome. He it was, His head crowned with thorns, His eyes full of tears, His visage marred more than any man's, His limbs dislocated and rent, in whom tender virgins discerned the fairest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely, and would have no other spouse for time or for eternity. Women whose whole lives were a pollution did but look on Him, in His ineffable sorrow, and the passion of desire was expelled by the stronger passion of compunction. Old men and little children, by the vision of Him, were inspired with a love stronger than death. The aged bishop, journeying to the place where the lions awaited him, "still alive, but longing to die," writes to his flock, "Now do I begin to be Christ's disciple." The sweet Syracusan maiden looks calmly upon her bleeding bosom, mutilated by the persecutor's knife, as she reflects: "I shall not be less beautiful in the eyes of my heavenly bridegroom." Sanctus the deacon, his limbs covered with plates of burning brass, so that his body was one entire wound and deprived of the form of man, would but say to all

the questions of his tormentors, "I am a Christian:" and as those who stood by testified, remained upright and unshrinking, "bathed and strengthened in the heavenly well of living water which flowed from the Heart of Christ." They endured, that noble army of martyrs, in the strength of Him whom, not having seen, they loved. The one feeling which dominated them and their brethren who gazed with envy upon their passion, and who reared their humble shrines, was that they were not their own, but were bought with a price: that their life—their true life—was hid with Christ in God. I know of no more conspicuous instance of overmastering, blinding prejudice, than that which is afforded by those who can read the early history of the Christian Church, the Acts of the Martyrs, the Peristephanon of Prudentius—that sublime monument of primitive faith and worship—and not discern this most patent fact. The Person of Christ, in whom, as they believed, dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, was all-in-all to these early disciples of Him, and was the direct source whence they derived their rule of life, in its highest and lowest details. It was as though men had acquired a new spiritual sense. Why did they cease from sin? Because Christ bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we being dead from sin should live unto righteousness. Why did they practise self-denial? Because Christ also pleased not Himself. Why did they exhibit patience when for conscience sake towards God they endured grief, suffering wrong-

fully? Because Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example. Why did they abstain from fleshly lusts? Because their members were the members of Christ. Why did they count as joy torments most hateful to flesh and blood? Because they thereby became partakers of Christ's sufferings. The whole matter is summed up in the precept of the Epistle to the Philippians: "Let that mind be in you which was in Christ." Christianity changed men's lives by changing their ideal of life. To put before men the ideal, the supernatural ideal of the Lord from Heaven, and to incite them to copy it—that is the whole secret of the Christian Revolution. Whether or no we are to believe the legend which represents the dying Emperor to have said: "Galilean—Thou hast conquered!"[1] the words express the literal and exact truth. The victory of Christianity was the personal victory of its Founder. It was no body of doctrine, no code of ethics, but the Prophet of Nazareth Himself, whom men slew and hanged upon a tree, that triumphed over the majesty of the Cæsars, and founded upon the ruins of the ancient Roman polity a mightier and more enduring empire.

This, then, was the great idea which underlay the Christian Revolution; the idea of God, the Universal

[1] I suppose the Νενίκηκας Γαλιλαῖε of Theodoret—auctor mihi valde suspectus—must be relegated to the domain of the fabulous. But it is one of those fables that are truer than most facts.

Father, revealed "in the face of Jesus Christ." This was the seed which, to use the Evangelical similitude, the great Sower cast into the religious conscience of mankind, and which in due season was to spring up into such a mighty harvest. As the oak is potentially in the acorn, so in this one idea is the whole doctrine and discipline of the Christian Church, which is but "the expanded Gospel." "He must reign," the Apostle says, "until He hath put all His enemies under His feet." But that regimen implies a code of laws and a polity. Accordingly, the work of the Church in the first four centuries was the organization, upon definite bases, of the Christian society. To systematize her teaching about God was the primary task to which she addressed herself. The essence of her doctrine is summed up in the Pauline proposition that "Christ was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of Holiness by the resurrection from the dead." Hence she formulates the most philosophical of her dogmas; and in the word Trinity, first used by Theophilus, towards the end of the second century, sums up this, the greatest of the mysteries of her creed. It was in the same century that Tertullian insisted upon the consubstantiality of the Son with the Almighty Father. In the next Origen maintained His eternal generation. Early in the fourth century Athanasius arises to contend for "the proportion of faith," and the Council of Nicæa embodies it in the well-known symbol, enlarged some fifty years afterwards at Constantinople

by more precise statements about the Holy Ghost;[1] and so cast into the form which it has since maintained. Thus, after a succession of triumphs over the fantasies and phantoms of Jewish and Pagan speculation did the Church build herself up in her own field of thought, as the Christian mind worked from dogma to dogma, while at the same time she was slowly but surely winning her victory over the Imperial power which rightly recognized in her an irreconcilable foe. The very fundamental principle upon which the Empire rested was that no organization distinct from its own could exist side by side with it. The Church, upon the other hand, claimed to be a kingdom, spiritual it is true, but visible, with a right to rule, direct, condemn or absolve her subjects, in complete independence of other authority. Internal, organic unity was one of her main notes, marking her off from the other two great religions of Buddhism and Islâm, which, like her, claim universality. It was the most striking difference between her and the cults and philosophies which surrounded her in the Roman Empire; the difference, I mean, which would most forcibly strike the Imperial authorities, and which, as a matter of fact, was the very gist of their accusations of her. True was the instinct which prompted the unbelieving Jews of Thessalonica to raise against

[1] This term was used very vaguely in the Early Church. Cardinal Newman remarks: "The word Spirit, if the Fathers are to be our expositors, sometimes means Almightly God without distinction of Persons, sometimes the Son, and more commonly the Holy Ghost."—See his *Athanasius*, vol. ii. p. 304.

St. Paul and St. Silas the cry of contravening the decrees of Cæsar by saying, "there is another king, one Jesus." It was a charge of *læsa majestas;* the charge that, of all others, would appeal strongly to the rulers of the Roman State, and most strongly to the best among them: to men like Trajan, Antoninus, Marcus Aurelius, and Hadrian, who believed the cause of civilization to be bound up with the Empire, which, as the Greek rhetorician said, with the picturesque exaggeration of his profession, had made of the world one city; for which the great geographer of antiquity claimed that "it had taught humanity to man." Well might those politic princes, as they surveyed from their high place their ecumenical domain, and considered the splendour of the literary and philosophical achievements, the sagacity of the jurisprudence, the magnificence of the organization, guarded by "the immense majesty of the Roman peace"—well might they have determined to put down by the severest measures a revolutionary sect that counted all this greatness as dross in comparison of a visionary life to come, preached by One who was dead, and whom His fanatical followers affirmed to be alive, and shortly to return to judge the world by fire. If ever *Kulturkampf* was set on foot with a clear show of justification it was this; and we know how vigorously it was carried on for well-nigh three centuries—with wide intervals of peace, indeed—from the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, in A.D. 29,

to the promulgation of the Edict of Toleration in A.D. 313. It failed. The victory remained with the spiritual order. Paganism may be said to have been conquered with its own weapon. It recognized no law but the right of the strongest; and love is stronger than death. Of what avail to slay men who counted not their lives dear in the service of their invisible King—nay, who judged that, by losing their lives for Him, they, in the truest sense, found them? Such power had the religion of Jesus Christ, when, to use the bold phrase of St. Jerome, "the blood of our Lord was yet warm, and faith in Him was still glowing among believers."

The Council of Nicæa, in A.D. 325, is the outward symbol of the victory of Christianity. The prolonged endeavour of the Empire to suppress it had failed. The sagacious mind of Constantine conceived the idea of using it as the bond to hold the Empire together. He himself attributes his resolve to convoke the assembly to "a kind of Divine inspiration." Unquestionably its meeting was a most momentous event, as well as a deeply significant sign of the times. In response to the Imperial letter, three hundred and sixteen bishops repaired to that little town of Asia Minor from every quarter of the Roman Empire; ἡ οἰκουμένη, the inhabited world, as it was wont to be called, in ignorant disdain of the vast regions lying beyond its borders. The geographical limits of the Empire and the Church

were indeed practically the same.[1] Only two prelates who owed no allegiance to Cæsar attended the synod—John, a Persian bishop, and Theophilus, a Scythian. It does not fall within my plan to dwell upon the proceedings of this august assembly, the special function of which was to put before the world the clear image of Christ and His kingdom. I merely point to it as the outward visible sign of the progress made by the Christian Revolution in three centuries. The words of the Thessalonican Jews had been strangely verified by the course of events. The faith preached by St. Paul and St. Silas had indeed turned the world upside down. Cæsar had acknowledged the supremacy of that other king, "one Jesus," whom they had proclaimed.

And now let us go on to consider that Revolution a little more closely, and inquire what was its effect upon the individual men on whom it wrought, and upon the civil society which is man's normal state. We shall see this best and most clearly by surveying one man, in whose writings we have not only the

[1] There is extremely little evidence regarding the spread of Christianity without the limits of the Empire in the first three centuries, and I strongly doubt whether, with the exception, perhaps, of Persia, it was carried much beyond the Roman frontier. The passages usually cited for the contrary view from Justin Martyr (*Dial, cum Tryp.* § 117), Tertullian (*Adv. Judæos*, c. 7), and Origen (*Contra Celsum*, l. i. 27, l. ii. 13), are evidently rhetorical exaggerations; and, as evidently, Irenæus (*Adv. Hær.* l. i. 5) is speaking of provinces of the Empire.

most complete revelation of the workings of an individual mind which human literature offers, and the most vivid image of the society in which he lived, but also the adumbration, as in high dream and solemn vision, of the age which was to come, and which he, more than any one else, was to mould and shape. I speak of St. Augustine, "l'homme le plus étonnant de l'église Latine," as M. Villemain well terms him, who sums up in himself the results of four centuries of moral and spiritual transition, and who cast Christian thought into the form in which it was to rule the western world for a thousand years; whose mind was as some vast lake, into which flowed the many streams of primitive Christian speculation, theological and metaphysical, and whence issued the two great rivers of medieval philosophy, the dogmatic and the mystical, which were to make glad the city of God.

The life of St. Augustine extends from A.D. 354 to A.D. 430. Its external incidents are so generally known that it will not be necessary here to do more than most briefly sketch them. The son of a burgess of Tagaste, in Numidia, of narrow fortune, and educated by the self-denying devotion of his parents, first at Madaura, and then at Carthage, he adopted, on arriving at man's estate, the profession of rhetoric in his native town. His father, Patricius, lived a Pagan, but received baptism at the point of death, being won to Christianity by that prudence, patience, and piety of St. Monica, of which her great son has

left so beautiful and touching a picture. Augustine was naturally of restless intellect, and of strong desires. Vehement alike in his worldly pursuits and his animal impulses, in his secular friendships and in his spiritual aspirations, his life for the first thirty-three years was spent without fixed principles in religion or philosophy; in coquettings now with one system and now with another. He does not seem to have been what the common standard of his day—or, indeed, of ours—would judge a libertine. There is no reason for supposing him to have been unfaithful to his mistress,[1] whom he took at the age of eighteen, and who lived with him for thirteen years, bearing him one son, to whom he gave the name of Adeodatus. In A.D. 376 the loss of a dearly loved friend induced him to leave Tagaste. The place, he says, in his vehement way, became intolerable to him; his heart "was utterly darkened, and whatever he looked upon was death." He removed to Carthage, and there practised his profession of a "seller of words" (as he calls it), until A.D. 383; then he went to Rome, whence two years afterwards he repaired to Milan as public lecturer in rhetoric. There four years later he was baptized by St. Ambrose, selling all his goods and giving the proceeds to the poor. In A.D. 388 he left Italy for Hippo Regius, a seaport of Numidia, and founded a religious community. The

[1] Concubina. I need hardly remark that in St. Augustine's time concubinage was almost recognized in Roman law as a lower form of marriage. The jurists call it "licita consuetudo."

next year Valerius, the bishop, ordained him priest, the insistence of the people overcoming his unwillingness. In A.D. 395 the same popular pressure forced him to become the coadjutor of Valerius, whom he succeeded in the see a few months afterwards. The remaining thirty-five years of his life were passed in the administration of his episcopal office, in polemical discussions against Manicheans, Pelagians, Donatists; in expounding, developing, and consolidating the philosophy and the theology of the Catholic Church. He died in A.D. 430, in the third month of the siege of his city by the Vandals, to the last doing with all his might the duties laid upon him, and never wavering in his perfect confidence in the Divine government of the world, while all around him men's hearts were failing them from fear, and for looking after those things which were coming upon the earth. "Thou art just, O Lord, and Thy judgment is right," was, as his biographer tells us, his habitual thought in those dark closing days of his earthly career. Supreme argument of religious faith in all ages and in all creeds; sole anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast, amid "storms of sad confusion," which might well seem to portend the foundering of a world.

In its outward circumstances the career of St. Augustine might be closely paralleled from the lives of many other ecclesiastics of his times. What renders him of peculiar importance to us, and especially for my present purpose, is that he has laid bare

for us his inner life. There is not one of his writings which does not do for us in its measure, and as it were by the way and unpremeditatedly, what is done more fully, and of set purpose, in the *Confessions:* that wonderful history of a soul, written as if in "starlight and immortal tears," which is, perhaps, the greatest treatise of mystical philosophy which the world possesses: great, not only in the high intellectual power which breathes throughout it, but in its purity, its sanity, its self-repression. Here he shows us how it was that the faith of Christ subdued him, and brought him into that captivity which is true liberty, and what the change was which it wrought in him. Let us listen to the tale which he unfolds.

But first we will glance at the conditions of his age. It would be as unphilosophical to leave them out as it would be to consider nothing else but them. It was the age, then, when the great fabric of imperial power which had been raised upon the ruins of Roman liberty was hastening to its fall. Seventeen years before St. Augustine was born, the first division of the Empire took place between the sons of Constantine. The year before his birth witnessed the soldering together of the fragments under Constantius; the year afterwards there is a new partition, and Valens and Valentinian fix their capitals, the one at Constantinople, the other at Milan. In A.D. 392 Theo-

dosius again brings East and West into one polity. But in A.D. 395 his reign of sixteen years comes to an end, and with it the united Empire. This is the great event which marks the close of the fourth century.

A great event, indeed; the token of swiftly-advancing political dissolution. But it was an age of intellectual and moral dissolution too. The old popular creeds of the countries which had passed under the civilizing yoke of conquering Rome had long been discredited for higher minds. Their spiritual guides were the philosophers, and the air resounded with the din of systems, in which every variety of opinion known to our own times seems to have been, more or less closely, anticipated. Augustine,[1] quoting Varro, tells us of no less than two hundred and eighty-eight doctrines which prevailed as to the primary question of the true end of human action. But in one respect all the teachers of decadent Paganism were alike. They were all lacking in any "consciousness of the sanctity of God, and of the need of sanctification in man."[2] This must be said even of the noblest of them, such as the Stoics, and even the Neo-Platonists. The evil in the world they recognized clearly enough, and as time went on with ever increasing clearness. But between physical and moral evil they drew only the slightest distinction. Fatalism is at the bottom of all their meta-

[1] *De Civitate*, l. xix. c. 1.

[2] Döllinger's *Heidenthum und Judenthum*, p. 633.

physical ideas, and is the last word of their arguments. I by no means underrate the loftiness of thought, the purity of motive, and integrity of life which distinguished many of these seekers after truth, of whom Marcus Aurelius is the noblest type. But the philosophy to which, with whatever measure of success, they turned as the guide of conduct, was the prerogative of a few favoured souls. The multitudes were left to a gross naturalism at once voluptuous and cruel: and to the outworn cults, which, if they outraged the reason, at all events ministered to the passions, and found their sanction in the lower self—the self of the ape and tiger—when they pressed bloodshed and impurity into the service of religion. Throughout the Roman Coliseum, the temple of the Sun, there ran "the transports of a fierce and monstrous gladness," as eighty thousand spectators looked down upon hecatombs of human victims in their dying agonies. The theatre, reared under the invocation of Venus, was devoted to obscenities as revolting as those wherewith the worship of "Reason" was celebrated in the churches of Paris by the founders of the first French Republic. However highly we may rate the philanthropy, the universal sympathy, the great jurisprudential ideas which we find in the literature of the decadent Empire, it is impossible to doubt that the popular mind was informed by no conception of the dignity and value of human personality; as indeed how should it have been in a society based upon slavery?

This is the capital fact which marks off that antique civilization from our own. In it, not only was the place filled among us by what we call "the masses" held by slaves, not inferior in race to their owners, but the physicians, the artists, the singers, the pedagogues were to a large extent persons of servile condition: the mere goods and chattels of their masters: helpless victims of cruelty or avarice or lust.

Such was the age into which Augustine was born. And early in life his keen, restless intellect asked the old question: What is the end of life? It was a book of Cicero's, now lost, a treatise containing an exhortation to philosophy, and called *Hortensius*, which inflamed him with the love of wisdom: which made all things seem vile to him in comparison of Truth, and kindled in his soul the desire to attain to it. He sought it on all sides: among the Manichees, whose claim that their doctrine was the religion of science, was proved vain by his happy scepticism; among the philosophies of Paganism, but none contented him, great and precious as were the verities which they enshrined. In Plato especially, as presented to him in the writings of the Neo-Platonists, he found lofty theistic conceptions, and noble thoughts as to man's true end in the vision of the Absolute and Eternal, and in union with It. This was the last word of Hellenic philosophy, and in some respects the best: and Augustine,[1] writing in after years, records his

[1] *De Civ.* l. x. c. 2.

great obligations to it. He learned from Plotinus—"magnus ille Platonicus," as he calls him—that the rational soul has above it no nature save that of God, the Creator of the world, and its Creator and Illuminator, in participation of whose Divine light is our beatitude. But this God was a mere soul of Nature—"universitatis anima"—and the Neo-Platonic doctrine as to the way of union with the divine (τὸ Θεῖον) was "as vague as all unsweet." Ascending, as he says in a memorable chapter[1] of his *Confessions*, from corporeal forms to the sentient soul ("sentientem per corpus animam"), and thence to its inner faculty (vis), to which the bodily senses make their reports, and thence again to the reasoning power which passes judgment upon the things thus signified to it, and from thence to the intellectual brightness by which the mind is illumined to discern truly, he attained to That Which Is, "in ictu trepidantis aspectus"

> "as when the light of sense
> Goes out, but with a flash that has revealed
> The invisible world."

The Unchanging, the Self-existing, the Absolute and the Eternal stood revealed to him. But how to get to it, how to attain union with it, he found not. "I was drawn irresistibly up to Thee by Thy beauty, and presently I was dragged down, down, by the weight of my burden: and this burden was fleshly habit": "et pondus hoc consuetudo carnalis."[2]

[1] *Confess.* l. vii. c. 17. [2] l. iii. c. 1.

What, then, was the "consuetudo carnalis" which thus weighed to the earth this soul of fire, striving to ascend to its true home: even to Him who is "igneus fons animarum?"[1] It was that love of the world and of the things of the world which, according to the Apostolic doctrine, is incompatible with the love of the Father: the fascination exercised upon him by the visible, sensible frame of things, appealing to the concupiscence of the flesh and the concupiscence of the eye and the pride of life. "I longed for honours, for riches, for wedlock," he says. And this longing held him back. And then he turned to St. Paul's Epistles, and there he read what the books of the Neo-Platonists told him not: of the law of sin reigning in his members and warring against the law of his mind and leading him captive: and "of the grace of God by Jesus Christ," powerful to deliver him from the body of this death. And these things sank marvellously into his inmost being, and he considered the Divine Works and was afraid.[3] For him it was a question of entire self-surrender or of none: of the religion of Jesus Christ in its highest form of the life of detachment and asceticism, or not at all. The easier state (*mollior locus*),[4] conceded to those who

[1] I need hardly refer to the opening line of the Burial Hymn of Prudentius:—

"Deus ignee fons animarum."

[2] *Confess.* l. vi. c. 6.

[3] "Hæc mihi inviscerabantur miris modis et consideraveram opera tua et expaveram."—*Confess.* l. vii. c. 2.

[4] *Confess.* l. viii. c. 1.

could not receive the hard saying counselling perfection, was not for him. "I had found the pearl of great price," he says, "and what I had to do was to sell all that I had and buy it: and I hesitated." What decided him? The example of others. One Pontitianus, a Christian, holding a high place in the Imperial Court, came to see him, on some trivial business, as he was sitting with his friend Alypius, reading St. Paul's Epistles; and finding him deeply interested in matters pertaining to the Christian faith, discoursed with him of such topics, and among other things spoke of the holy and ascetic lives of St. Anthony and the solitaries of the Thebaid, and of two friends of his own, who, while in attendance with him upon the Emperor at Trèves, had been smitten with the charm of the religious life, and in order to embrace it had abandoned their secular career and their affianced wives.[1] This story inflamed Augustine, and made him seem utterly vile in his own eyes.[2] But fetters, once deemed silken, now strong as iron, held him fast. "Those ancient mistresses of mine," he says, "trifles of trifles, and vanities of vanities, as they were, kept me back, and plucked me by the garment of the flesh, and murmured in my ear, 'Are you then, in very truth, going to send us away? And, from this moment, will you not see us again—for ever?

[1] "Et habebant ambo sponsas: quæ posteaquam hæc audierunt, dicaverunt etiam ipsæ virginitatem Tibi."—*Confess.* l. vii. c. 21.

[2] "Constituebas me ante faciem meam ut viderem quam turpis essem, quam distortus et sordidus, maculosus et ulcerosus."—*Ibid.* c. 7.

And will you never, never, again do this and that? And what a this and that was it which they suggested to me, O my God! What vileness, what disgrace!" The interior conflict moved him to tears, and he went apart to be alone. Then as he kept saying to himself: "How long, how long? to-morrow and to-morrow; and why not now?" the famous words fell upon his ears: "Tolle et lege, tolle et lege:" "Take it up and read it, take it up and read it." And remembering what he had just heard about St. Anthony—how the Saint from lighting, by chance, as it seemed, upon the verse of the Gospel: "Go, sell all that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow Me," had been led to embrace the eremite life—he went back to the place where he had left the book of St. Paul's epistles, beside his friend Alypius. "I took it up," he tells us; "I opened it and perused in silence the words upon which my eyes first fell: 'Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying: but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.' I had no wish to read more: nor was there need. No sooner had I finished the sentence than light and peace seemed to be infused into my heart, and doubt and darkness fled away."

"Indumini Dominum Jesum Christum." Here was the ideal which he had at last found. Henceforth his rule of action was not his former perverse will,

but "the good and acceptable and perfect Will" to which he sought to be conformed by the renewing of his mind: "nolle quod volebam et velle quod volebas."[1] The objects of concupiscence which had so fascinated him, the love of wealth, of honour, of woman, now seemed to him vain and unsubstantial as phantoms of the night. He was a blind man whose eyes had been opened. In his own phrase, the sweetness of eternal things had expelled the desire of temporal. What he had most feared to lose it was now a joy to him to put away. He had attained freedom from "the biting cares" of worldly pursuits: the freedom of which the condition is entire detachment—"renonciation douce et totale," in the words of the writer who, of all others, in modern times, seems to have drunk most deeply into his spirit:

> "Love took up the harp of life and smote on all the chords with might:
> Smote the chord of self, that trembling passed in music out of sight."

I know of nothing in literature that breathes a deeper spirit of solemn jubilation than the pages of the *Confessions*[2] in which Augustine recounts these things; pages which are like Beethoven's *Funeral*

[1] Compare Fénelon: "Tout passe devant mes yeux, mais rien ne m'importe; rien n'est mon affaire sinon l'affaire unique de faire la volonté de Dieu."

[2] In the earlier portion of the ninth book of his *Confessions*, which all who can should read in the original. No translation can present more than a dim adumbration of its splendour and pathos.

March of a Hero done into words. They are indeed the burial psalm of his old self and the prelude to his new life. Then another theme is introduced, and in chapters in which deep human tenderness, and ecstatic aspiration, and sorrow, but not as of those who have no hope, contend for the mastery, he tells us of his mother, Monica, and of the closing scenes of her earthly pilgrimage. After that he goes on to speak of himself as he had become since he had bowed his head to the yoke and laid upon himself the burden of Christ, and had taken up His cross and followed Him. Many, he says, whether they themselves knew me in former days or knew me not, or have heard from me or of me, would fain know what manner of man I am now: what my inner self is. To such will I unfold myself, as far as I may: for what man knows himself wholly: knows, as he is known to Him who made him? One thing, indeed, he knows and is assured of: that the Divine Word, quick and piercing, and sharper than any two-edged sword, has wounded his heart and has inflamed it with the love of God: "non dubia sed certa conscientia, Domine, amo Te: percussisti enim cor meum Verbo Tuo, et amavi Te." But what is it that he loves when he loves God? and where does he find God? The whole universe of order and beauty proclaims the Supreme Intelligence that made it; reveals Him, while it veils Him; confesses, I am not He, but He made me. Nothing material can be He. The mind must be more excellent than the matter which it vivifies. But God

is the life of our life. And so Augustine turns to his own mind, and considers its faculties and powers, and in pages of marvellous subtlety and sweetness explores "the plains and spacious halls of memory." Surely God dwells there: but how? Not among the images of corporeal things, not among the affections of the mind, not in that very seat of the mind itself which is fixed in the memory. "But why speak of place," he asks, "as though in very truth place existed there? In my memory dost Thou certainly dwell, for I remember Thee since I learnt Thee: and there do I find Thee when I remember Thee." And then he bursts forth: "Too late have I loved Thee, O Beauty, so old and so new; too late have I loved Thee! And behold! Thou wast within and I without: and there did I seek Thee, greedily rushing in my deformity after those fair forms which Thou hast made. Thou wast with me when I was far from Thee. And those things which exist but because Thou art in them, they held me back from Thee. Thou calledst me, Thou criedst after me, Thou overcamest my deafness: Thou sentest forth Thy lightnings, Thou shinedst in Thy splendour, and didst put to flight my blindness. Thy sweet fragrance encompassed me, and I drew in my breath and panted after Thee. I have tasted of Thee, and I hunger and thirst still. Thou didst lay Thy hand upon me and I burned for Thy peace." Thus much, as to his inner self, the Saint is sure of. Sure, too, is he of the daily conflict which is waged in him between the higher law and the other law that is in

his members. What is the life of man but a warfare upon earth? Every one of his senses is a possible avenue for sin. Every action of life is a possible occasion of falling. "Many and great," he confesses, "are the sicknesses of my soul: but Thy medicine is more than sufficient to heal them. Well might we have thought Thy Word far removed from union with men, but that He was made flesh and dwelt among us." Here is his hope of instruction for his ignorance: of healing for his infirmity. But for this he should despair. And hence his rule of life, according to the Apostolic dictum: "Therefore Christ died for all, that they who live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them." This is that aboriginal law of self-sacrifice which links the Supreme to His creatures: a law of which the practical outcome is duty, founded upon the constraining influence of Divine charity.

Here, then, is a type of the work wrought in the individual by the Christian Revolution; the story of countless millions, "writ large." The highest ideal of ancient Paganism was to live out one's impulses without restraint: to warm "both hands before the fire of life," in the words of a modern writer who drank deeply into its spirit: but with prudence—which Landor, indeed, cannot be said to have exhibited—so as not to burn one's fingers. Or—to change the metaphor, and to use the words of Cicero, and, as I think, of Socrates too—so to go through human existence that when the inevitable hour of departure

arrives we may quit it like a guest satisfied with the banquet of which he has partaken. I suppose we are warranted in saying that Aristotle's μεγαλόψυχος is the loftiest conception of man known to the ancient philosophy; and I am far from denying the greatness of the magnanimous or high-minded character, as he has depicted it in a well-known chapter of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. High-mindedness, he says, is the crown of all virtue, and the high-minded man occupies himself with honour, and lays claim to it, and takes pleasure in it, but not excessive pleasure, for he has obtained only what he merits, and perhaps less than he merits: he loves to confer a favour, but feels shame at the reception of one, for that implies in him a certain inferiority: he is generally esteemed arrogant, and no wonder, for he justly despises his neighbour: he is open in his enmities and his loves, and bears himself to ordinary men with moderation, for haughtiness towards the lowly is a sign of bad breeding. Now turn to the Christian ideal, as you find it in the Sermon on the Mount, with its glorification of poverty, mourning, meekness, hunger and thirst after righteousness, mercy, peaceableness and purity—that distinctively Christian virtue which has been accounted by some "a new disease brought into the world by Christ." As I have said, Christianity changed the lives of men by changing their ideal of life. The magnitude of the revolution which it wrought upon the individual may be judged of by comparing the Stagirite's high-minded man with the humble and

holy man of heart of the Beatitudes. The one deifies and worships human nature and its passions: the other crucifies the flesh with the affections and lusts. Enlightened selfishness is the highest word of Aristotle. "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself:" "whoever will save his life shall lose it"—such is the very substance of the doctrine of Christ. And it was precisely this ideal of self-renunciation, it was precisely this asceticism, this "dédain transcendant,"[1] as M. Renan happily phrases it—the true doctrine of liberty of souls, as he judges—which is of the essence of Christianity, that appealed to and overcame Augustine. But this self-renunciation was not irrational. Although not the result of calculation, it justified itself by an appeal to the infinitely greater value of one soul over the whole universe of matter. It founded itself upon the vanity and nothingness of what was given up. It was the lower self that was abolished, mortified, done to death; or, in St. Paul's phrase, kept under and brought into subjection. The life which was lost was that phantasmal life of the senses which St. Augustine has described in a memorable passage.[2] One of the leading thoughts in his writings is the impermanence, the illusoriness of the visible frame of things. He has summed it up in two pregnant

[1] *Vie de Jésus*, p. 119.

[2] "Quorum vita est spectare, contendere, manducare, bibere, concumbere, dormire, et in cogitatione sua nihil aliud quam phantasmata quæ de tali vita colliguntur amplexari."—*De Vera Religione*, c. 54.

words, "internum æternum." The parallel between his doctrine and Gautama's in this respect is singularly close. The main difference is that the place which in the Buddhist system is held by *Nirvâna*, is filled in his by what he calls Idipsum, the Self Same, or, as we may perhaps say, the Thing in Itself: the only true reality, for he does not allow that the phenomenal universe is, in the highest sense, real. The reality beneath it, without which it would crumble into nothingness, is the will of Him who alone can say "Ego Sum Qui Sum:" I am the Self Existent. He alone is the One Who Is: dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto: and Jesus Christ is the Mediator by whom man is strengthened for the knowledge and fruition of Him—"the image of the Invisible God;" the realization of the last wish of the religious instinct: the Eternal made flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone and blood of our blood; proving all sorrows in His sacred humanity; one with us in the great sacrament of suffering, and able to call us in the truest sense His brethren. Christ is a visible, personal, living law, realizing the conception of Pagan antiquity; virtue incarnate, and drawing all hearts by its beauty. But the life of Christ was a long battle against the world. He is the supreme example of detachment from its pleasant things—the objects of concupiscence.[1] It is the God

[1] It may not be superfluous to point out that I use the word in its technical sense; that habitual inclination to desire finite things inordinately, which, according to the Council of Trent, is not

exhibited in the Crucifix in an unfathomable mystery of love and sorrow who at once raises morality to the height of sanctity: a conception unknown to the ancient world, which never went beyond the *honestum*. St. Augustine dwells upon this in a striking passage of his short, but quite invaluable, treatise *On True Religion*. "The nations," he writes, "were thirsting, to their own destruction after riches as the ministers of pleasure: He willed to be poor. They longed for honour and power: He refused to be a king. They esteemed children, after the flesh, a great good: He despised such wedlock and such offspring. In the plenitude of their pride they abhorred insults: He suffered them in every form. They deemed injuries intolerable: what greater injury could there be than the condemnation of the Just, the Innocent? They loathed corporal suffering: He was scourged and tormented. They feared to die: He suffered death. They thought the Cross the most shameful kind of death: He was crucified. Everything for love of which we lived amiss, He did without and stamped as worthless. Everything to avoid which we have shrunk from the Truth, He endured and made easy to us. For it is impossible to commit any sin, save by seeking after the things which He despised, or by flying from the things which He endured. And

strictly speaking sin, but "ex peccato est et ad peccatum inclinat" (Sess. v. c. 5), and that for two reasons; first, because it turns man away from his true final end, which is God; and, secondly, because it cannot be gratified save at the expense of others.

so His whole life on earth, in the human nature which He deigned to assume, was a system of moral discipline."[1]

So much as to the effect of the Christian Revolution upon the individual. I am, of course, far from saying that it wrought in this supreme degree upon the mass. It had its perfect work in few. Those few best exhibit its working. What it was to them it was in some degree—in a degree almost infinitely varying—to all who received the faith of Christ, even though their lives were led upon the lower levels of humanity. To all it proposed Him as the one Type —"our life," in the emphatic words of the sacred writer—the perfect ideal. And the furthest removed from that type, the least like that ideal, knew well that the all-important fact about himself was his citizenship of a spiritual kingdom, of which conformity to the mind of Christ was the first law. There can be no question at all that Christianity presented itself to the decadent and moribund civilization of the Roman Empire as an ascetic doctrine:[2] a doctrine of abstinence, not only from the things

[1] *De Vera Religione*, c. xvi.

[2] "Cette abnégation de soi-même et de tout ce qu'il y a de terrestre de sensible ou d'humain en nous et hors de nous, est le caractère propre et éminent de la philosophie chrétienne à laquelle, sous ce rapport, nulle autre ne peut être comparée et qui surpasse tout ce que la philosophie des anciens a de plus élevé."—Maine de Biran: *Pensées*, p. 282.

which it branded as positively sinful, but from things in themselves licit. The world, which St. John exhorts his disciples not to love, because the love of it is incompatible with the love of the Father, which he describes as lying in the wicked one, which, over and over again, in the New Testament the disciples of Christ are bidden to forsake and overcome, and which—such is the vitality of phrases—stands, even in our own day, for the complete antithesis of the Church, is the present visible frame of things, doomed, as those early preachers believed, soon to pass away with the lust thereof: the flesh in which St. Paul declared no good thing to dwell, which it was his daily endeavour to keep under and bring into subjection, is the whole of man's lower or animal nature. Whatever is doubtful, this is clear. And to those who do not admit it we may say, without discourtesy, that, whether through ignorance or prejudice, they are so hopelessly in the dark on this matter, as to render any argument with them regarding it mere waste of time.

The principle, then, which transformed the individual by the renewing of his mind, was the principle of self-sacrifice. And this was the principle which transformed society. Christianity was primarily a message to the individual soul. It was a calling addressed to each, without distinction of race or rank, or sex or secular condition. But it was a calling into a polity. The words ἐκκλησία and ἐκλεκτοὶ speak for themselves. The disciples of Christ were called

out of the world and into the Church, which was truly a society, with its own king, its own laws, its own magistrates. Most interesting would it be to trace the growth of this society; to note its marvellous hierarchical development, as it overlaps the secular state[1] and the ecclesiastical organization grows up on the lines of the civil, the Diocese, the unit, then the Province (the ecclesiastical use inverted the civil dignity of the two terms) and lastly, the Patriarchate, corresponding more or less closely with the Prefecture: while the ruler of the Roman Church imperceptibly takes the place of the Pontiff of Jupiter Capitolinus—the Flamen Dialis, who as Festus says, was "the Priest of the world rather than of the City." But I must not linger upon this topic. Nor is it necessary that I should do so, for it has been well dealt with by many writers, the latest among them, and assuredly not the least erudite and accomplished, being M. Renan.[2] I am rather concerned to indicate how this spiritual empire affected civil society: to point out the main lines of the Revolution which it wrought in the public order.

And here, too, I shall follow St. Augustine. As in his *Confessions* he has revealed to us the operation of the Christian Revolution upon the individual, so

[1] Origen speaks of the Word of God as having founded everywhere a hierarchy parallel to that of the state.—*Contra Celsum*, l. viii. c. 75.

[2] See his *Conférences d'Angleterre*, pp. 167-9.

in his *City of God* he has traced its operation upon society. His keenly attuned ear caught the sound of "the Spirit of the years to come, yearning to mix himself with life;" his piercing eye discerned the "phantoms of other forms of rule" which were slowly evolving themselves in his own time to supplant the old order of the Roman world. Even when he wrote civilization was becoming ecclesiastical. It was his gift to seize, and set down, and creatively to shape, its main lines.

It has been well observed by Ozanam, that no event of supreme importance to the world has ever occurred without producing an imperishable poem, although it may be a different sort of poem from what we should have expected. Thus, to the battle of Actium, which marks the rise of the Empire, he refers the inspiration to which we owe the *Æneid:* while the entry of Alaric into Rome, in A.D. 410—the signal of its fall—unquestionably produced the magnificent prose poem of Augustine. A great and exceeding bitter cry went up that this supreme catastrophe was the work of the new religion. And Augustine undertook to "justify the ways of God to men." His *City of God* is the first systematic attempt to exhibit in their close relations and interdependence, philosophy, history and theology.

Two commonwealths (civitates), he declares, exist among men: the City of the Earth, built by the love of self, carried to the degree of contempt of God: the Heavenly City, reared by the love of God, carried

to the degree of contempt of self. Of the one he sees the type and founder in Cain, of the other in Seth; but for the origin of both he goes back to the separation of "the angels who kept not their first estate," from their compeers loyal to the Divine Majesty. He traces the history of the two cities throughout the ages, using with great skill the comparatively slender materials available to him: for, of course, the philosophies and theologies and annals of the East were no more known to him than were the revelations whereby physical science in these latter days has so vastly enlarged and so largely transformed our conceptions of the material universe. He goes on to point out—it is the first time that we meet with the thought—how the Roman Empire, by bringing the nations into one polity, and subjecting them to the same jurisprudence—which he elsewhere recognizes as a Divine creation[1]—prepared the way for the spread of the Christian faith. Then he dwells upon the diverse ends of the two commonwealths; the one resting upon the doctrine of the Greek sophist that man is the measure of all things, making life its own object, and the seen and temporal the bound of human aspirations; the other measuring all things by the ideal of Christ, and reaching forward to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and reserved in heaven. Here the two commonwealths are intermingled, for they exist side by side.

[1] He somewhere says: "Leges Romanorum divinitus per ora principum emanarunt."

But the City of the Earth is doomed to perish. The City of God has its foundations upon "the holy hills:" it is the Jerusalem, the Vision of Peace, which is from above, whose King is Truth, whose Law is Charity, whose mode (modus) is Eternity. In it alone is true liberty; the liberty of those whom Christ has made free from sin. The City of the Earth, governed by the lust of power, is the slave of concupiscence, even when it boasts itself the conqueror of the world.

Such is a bird's-eye view of the main argument of this famous treatise—I am not concerned with the merely apologetic part of it—the great and lasting value of which seems to me to lie in its emphatic proclamation of the spiritual nature of man as a domain over which the civil order has no power—a principle by the assertion of which the Church had been revealed to the world. The ancient jurist had declared, like the modern demagogue, that all is Cæsar's. St. Augustine sketches a spiritual society based upon a higher law even than the jurisprudence of Imperial Rome, and bearing allegiance to a greater potentate than the Emperor. It was a new conception in the world, and was destined most potently to influence the structure of society. It gave rise to what was called Christendom—a word which, by itself, if we rightly understand it, is sufficient to indicate the vastness of the Revolution wrought by the faith of Christ in the public order. The first fact about a man for a thousand years after the *City of*

God was written was not his race but his religion. That, I say, was held to be the prime fact of life, and upon it the public order was professedly based. In pre-Christian Europe religions had been viewed in a very different light. They occupied, indeed, a highly important place in the State, as being the bonds of nations and society. They were deemed necessary to corporate existence; and thus we find Plato, in the *Republic*, describing "the erection of temples and the appointment of sacrifices and other ceremonies in honour of the gods," and "all the observances we must adopt in order to propitiate the inhabitants of the unseen world," as "the most momentous, the most august, and the highest acts of legislation."[1] And they were regarded strictly as matters of public concern; they were the religions of nations, not of individuals; they were tribal, not personal; for the nation was originally a tribe. But the tribe, again, was merely an enlarged family. It was the family,[2]

[1] Τί οὖν ἔφη ἔτι ἂν ἡμῖν λοιπὸν τῆς νομοθεσίας εἴη; καὶ ἐγὼ εἶπον ὅτι Ἡμῖν μὲν οὐδέν, τῷ μέντοι Ἀπόλλωνι τῷ ἐν Δελφοῖς τά τε μέγιστα καὶ κάλλιστα καὶ πρῶτα τῶν νομοθετημάτων. Τὰ ποῖα; ἦ δ' ὅς. Ἱερῶν τε ἱδρύσεις καὶ θυσίαι καὶ ἄλλαι θεῶν τε καὶ δαιμόνων καὶ ἡρώων θεραπεῖαι, τελευτησάντων τε αὖ θῆκαι καὶ ὅσα τοῖς ἐκεῖ δεῖ ὑπηρετοῦντας ἵλεως αὐτοὺς ἔχειν. τὰ γὰρ δὴ τοιαῦτα οὔτ' ἐπιστάμεθα ἡμεῖς οἰκίζοντές τε πόλιν οὐδενὶ ἄλλῳ πεισόμεθα, ἐὰν νοῦν ἔχωμεν, οὐδὲ χρησόμεθα ἐξηγητῇ ἀλλ' ἢ τῷ πατρίῳ. οὗτος γὰρ δήπου ὁ θεὸς περὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις πάτριος ἐξηγητὴς ἐν μέσῳ τῆς γῆς ἐπὶ τοῦ ὀμφαλοῦ καθήμενος ἐξηγεῖται. Καὶ καλῶς γ', ἔφη λέγεις· καὶ ποιητέον οὕτω. Book iv. c. 5.

[2] "Groups of men united by the reality or the fiction of blood relationship," as Sir Henry Maine puts it.—*Ancient Law*, p. 126.

natural or artificial, not the individual, that was the unit of archaic society; and this comes out very distinctly in the sphere of religion. Thus Cato says, in his instructions to his Bailiff: "It is the paterfamilias who offers worship for the whole family:"[1] in a religious, as in a civil point of view, the personality of its members was merged in him. But Christianity did in the religious sphere what Roman jurisprudence was doing in the civil: it substituted the individual for the family as the unit of which it took account, ranking him higher than the State, and the law of conscience before the law of public interest. Thus, by proclaiming the ineffable worth of human personality, did it re-create the individual. And similar was the transformation which it wrought upon the family. In the ancient world, as one of the first of living historians has pithily expressed it, woman "was degraded in her social position, because she was deemed unworthy of moral consideration; and her moral consideration again fell lower and lower, precisely because her social position was so degraded."[2] This—Horace bears emphatic testimony to the fact—was the very fount of the corruption which overflowed human life in the decadent Roman society. By proclaiming the spiritual equality of woman with man, Christianity raised her to her true position, while by setting upon monogamy the seals of sanctity and

[1] "Scito dominum pro tota familia rem divinam facere."—*De Re Rust.*, c. 143.

[2] Merivale's *Conversion of the Northern Nations*, p. 144.

indissolubility, it made her preservation of that place an essential part of its system, gradually sublimating into an ideal sentiment what in the ancient world had been little more than an animal appetite. Its effect upon the public order was, for long, indirect, but was not, upon that account, the less potent. Starting with the assertion of man's moral liberty and responsibility, the very postulates of her doctrine, the Church poured into the nations crushed and degraded by imperialism, a new virility, freeing and invigorating the human faculties; while by her self-made constitution, her elected rulers, her deliberative councils, she kept alive the free democratic traditions, which Cæsarism had almost strangled, and trained the barbarian tribes who entered her fold in the principles and exercise of true liberty. As the subjects of the City of the Earth became the subjects of the City of God, the civil polity was informed by new principles. In the quaint language of Jeremy Taylor: the "Christians, growing up from conventicles to assemblies, from assemblies to societies, introduced no change in the government, but by little and little turned the commonwealth into a Church."[1] It was felt that a society of Christians ought to be a Christian society, and gradually the civil order was guided and governed by the principles of religion. An eminent English judge once laid it down—the dictum is now somewhat musty—that Christianity is part of the law of England. Of Christendom, while Christendom was,

[1] *Life of Christ.* Preface.

it might truly be said that the law was part of the religion. Everywhere the cross of Christ was confessed to be the interpretation of life and the measure of the world, and a supernatural end was kept in view. Thus, St. Thomas Aquinas declares that the chief object which the civil ruler ought to have before him is the eternal beatitude of himself and his subjects,[1] and what may seem almost incredible in these days, even in guilds of the most distinctively industrial character the making of money was not the first thing sought after. "They set up something higher than personal gain or mere materialism;" Mr. Toulmin Smith well observes: "their main characteristic was to make the teaching of love to one's neighbour be not coldly accepted as a hollow dogma of morality, but known and felt as a habit of life."[2] "In the accounts of the Company of Grocers," writes Dr. Brentano, "it is mentioned that at their very first meeting they fixed the stipend of the priest who had to conduct their religious services and to pray for their dead. In this respect," he adds, "the craft gilds of all countries are alike, and in reading their statutes we might fancy sometimes that these old craftsmen cared only for the well-being of their souls."[3] I take these instances almost at random.

[1] "Finis ad quem principaliter rex intendere debet in seipso et in subditis est æterna beatitudo."—*De Regim. Princ.*, 1, ~~2,~~ c. 3. Observe the force of the word "principaliter."

[2] *Traditions of the old Crown House*, p. 28.

[3] *The Original Ordinances of more than One Hundred Gilds.* Intr. p. 13.

Every department of life, in the Ages of Faith, tells the same tale. The dominant idea everywhere is the Fatherhood of God revealed in Him who pleased not Himself, but humbled Himself unto death, making the great law of sacrifice the first law of His religion. And it is precisely this idea which marks off those ages from the times preceding them, and which is the source of their true greatness. Let no one suppose that I have the least sympathy with that religious romanticism which paints for us a medieval period full of seraphic sweetness. I know well the dark side of the history of the Middle Ages, recorded in terrible distinctness alike by saints and sinners, by doctors and heresiarchs:

> "Face loved of little children long ago!
> Head hated of the priests and rulers then!
> Say, was not this thy passion—to foreknow
> In Thy death's hour, the works of Christian men!"

True it is that medieval iniquities were upon the same scale with medieval virtues. But, on the other hand, it seems to me unquestionable that, as M. Littré says, the medieval period "est plus d'un coté supérieur aux temps qui l'ont précédé," and that as he goes on to add, "il l'est particulièrement dans l'état social."[1] For myself I would claim for it, that resting, as it did, upon the morality of self-renunciation, it is superior to the times that preceded it in all that makes up civilization in the higher sense of the word:

[1] *Études sur les Barbares et le Moyen Age*, p. 239.

that it is "further advanced in the road to perfection; happier, wiser, nobler."[1] Christianity, preaching pitifulness and courtesy, deifying sorrow, simplicity, weakness and humility, poverty and purity, had opened an ever-flowing fount of tenderness, of compassion, of pure love, which caused the very desert places of humanity to rejoice and blossom as the rose. Main tests of the social position of any community are the places held in it by women and children, by the indigent and the aged: and judged by these tests Christendom stands far above any previous organization of society. But its superiority appears to me to be hardly less clearly marked in its public polity, its literature, and its art, which were all informed by the same spirit. The notion of unlimited dominion, of Cæsarism, autocratic or democratic—perhaps the most baneful manifestation of human selfishness—had no place among its political conceptions, which regarded authority as limited and fiduciary: nor did it allow of absolutism in property; the canon law expressly lays down that extreme necessity makes all things common, excusing theft and palliating robbery with violence; that both clergy and laity are at all times

[1] "The word civilization is a word of double meaning. We are accustomed to call a country civilized if we think it more improved, more eminent in the best characteristics of man and society, further advanced on the road to perfection, happier, nobler, wiser. But, in another sense, it stands for that kind of improvement which distinguishes a wealthy and powerful nation from savages or barbarians."—J. S. Mill, *Discussions and Dissertations*, vol. i. p. 160.

bound to provide alms, as a duty of strict justice, even if need be by their own manual labour; for alms, in the words of St. Ambrose, are the right of the poor: and the giving them is rather to be regarded as the discharge of a debt than the extension of a voluntary bounty. In its literature Dante sounds a deeper note than had gone forth from his master, Virgil; and the very source of his inspiration is the austere spiritualism of the Catholic creed. In its philosophy St. Thomas Aquinas surveys the field of human thought from a loftier standpoint than any sage of Greece or Rome, and maps it out with a fulness and precision unattained even by him whom he reverently calls "the Philosopher:" and it was from the Crucifix that the Angelic Doctor derived his intellectual light, and there that he discerned—according to the beautiful legend—his only and exceeding great reward. Medieval art, even in its rudest stage, is informed by a higher ideal than ever dawned upon the mind of Hellenic painter or sculptor or architect: by the sentiment of the Infinite, revealed in the divinely human Person of the Man of Sorrows, the Son of the *Mater Dolorosa*. All that was great in that vanished public order which we call Christendom, flowed from the self-abnegation which is the central idea of Christianity. Singular paradox that this new civilization, so rich, and fertile, and varied—the direct source of all that is highest and noblest in our own age, and in each of us—should have been the work of men whose first principle it was to despise the world:

that the greatest democratic movement, the most potent instrument of human enfranchisement, should have been a doctrine which made so light of personal freedom as to bid the slave care not for its loss: that the most effectual vindication of the most sacred rights of humanity should be referable to teachers who spoke only of its duties. Sublime commentary upon the saying of the Author of Christianity: "He that loseth his life for My sake shall find it." Strong assurance that "He knew what was in man," and that "His word shall not pass away."

CHAPTER II.

THE TURNING-POINT OF THE MIDDLE AGES.

In the history of modern Europe, four great events stand out as landmarks upon which the student who desires accurately to explore that great field will do well to fix his earnest attention. The first is the coronation of Charles the Great on Christmas Day in the year 800; the second the election of Hildebrand to the Papal Chair on the 22nd of April, 1073; the third, the fall of Constantinople on the 29th of May, 1453; the fourth, the sacking of the Bastille on the 14th of July, 1789. The bestowal of the Imperial Crown upon the great Frankish monarch by Pope St. Leo III. was the outward visible sign of that new order which had "been made secretly and fashioned beneath in the earth," amid the decay and dissolution of the Roman world: it was the beginning of the Middle Ages. The Pontificate of St. Gregory VII. was the turning-point of those ages, determining, in vitally important matters, the course which they were to run. The taking of Constantinople by Mohammed II. marks their close; it was this event that, by scattering Greek scholars over Italy, contributed more

than anything else to the movement ambiguously called the Renaissance, and to all that came therefrom, including the Protestant Reformation, which, in Germany at all events, certainly was, in part, a reaction against the new heathenism of Humanist Popes and prelates. And the passing-bell of the Cæsarism which had arisen upon the ruins of the medieval order is sounded in the presageful words of the Duke of Liancourt, when announcing to Louis XVI. the capture of the royal fortress and the murder of its little garrison: "Sire, it is not a revolt; it is a revolution." Perhaps of all these great events, the second is that the significance of which is least understood. And yet, certainly, it is by no means the least worthy of careful and exact study. This Europe of this nineteenth century into which we have been born "is made and moulded of things past." Every death is but a transformation of life. And the medieval period, dead though it is in one sense, in another and as true a sense is living and working in our midst. The generations pass away; but their doing remains. To borrow a phrase from Buddhism, "We inherit the *karma* of the countless multitudes who have lived and died, who have struggled and suffered, in the long ages of the past."[1] And, as I venture to think, by far the most important part of our heritage in this new time is that which has come to us directly from the medieval period. Of that period the greatest figure, beyond all question, is

[1] Mr. Rhys Davids' *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 215.

Hildebrand, and its most momentous struggle the conflict to which he received his supreme consecration upon the day when the Papal tiara was set upon his head. Moreover, the great issue in which he bore so masterful a part is still before the world, under other names. The battle yet rages, though waged under different conditions. And now at last the time has perhaps arrived when one may hope to obtain a patient hearing for the cause of the great Pontiff who bore his part in the fray so valiantly.

For centuries the memory of Hildebrand lay under reprobation as the very type of insatiable ambition and spiritual pride. Instead of the aureole of sanctity, a kind of diabolical splendour encircled him, and the grim pun, borrowed from the German, whereby he is described in the Anglican *Book of Homilies* as "the brand of Hell" did but express the general estimate of him formed alike by Teutonic and English historians. Nor was he judged more favourably in France. "The Church has numbered him among the saints. The wise have numbered him among madmen,"[1] writes Voltaire. And even among French ecclesiastical writers of authority there are those who have recorded a scarcely more favourable verdict upon him. But Time has at length retried his cause—Time,

> "who solves all doubt
> By bringing Truth, his glorious daughter, out."

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[1] "L'Église dont il fut le vengeur et la victime, l'a mis au nombre des saints. . . . . Les sages l'ont mis au nombre des fous." —*Essai sur les Mœurs.*

Within the last half-century investigators more thorough, exact, judicial, in a word, scientific, have examined, with most fruitful results, the question what manner of man Hildebrand was, and of what kind his work was. So long ago, indeed, as 1815, Voigt, in his *Hildebrand als Papst Gregor VII.*, opened out to his astonished countrymen quite a new view of the great Pontiff: but it is perhaps to M. Guizot, more than to any one else, that we owe the passing away of the old error from the European mind. It was in 1828 that this illustrious teacher, setting at nought the inveterate Gallican tradition, exhibited Hildebrand to his hearers at the Sorbonne, not in the guise of a reactionary, an obscurantist, a foe of intellectual development and of social progress, but as a reformer alike of the Church and civil society, upon the basis of morality, of justice, of order: as a great constructive genius, who did a work parallel to that of Charlemagne or Peter the Great. It is not easy to over-estimate—and just now the tendency appears to be greatly to underrate—the services which M. Guizot's calm courage, judicial mind, wide learning, and singular power of generalization have rendered to the cause of scientific history. But of all those services none deserves to be more highly valued than the effort made by him to mete out even justice to the heroic champion of the Church, in the great struggle between the Papacy and the Empire. It is, indeed, but a mere sketch which he has given us of the character and actions of Gregory VII. But the

outlines are there traced as by a few strokes of a pencil in the hand of a master, and it has been a tolerably easy task for later scholars to complete the picture. The laborious erudition of Germany has placed before the world a mass of authentic documents, among which Jaffé's *Regesta Pontificum Romanorum* and *Monumenta Gregoriana* deserve especial mention; while Gförer's massive work, *Papst Gregorius VII. und sein Zeitalter*, is a perfect treasure-house of learning; and Giesebrecht's *Geschichte der Deutschen Kaiserzeit*, the production of an author formed in a different school, and written under the influence of other convictions, merits hardly less attention. To France, too, we owe several important contributions to the subject with which I am concerned. It must suffice here to speak briefly of three of them. First, there is M. Mignet's series of articles entitled, *La Lutte des Papes contre les Empereurs d'Allemagne*, which attracted so much attention when they appeared in the *Journal des Savants*, and in which, whether we assent or dissent, as we read them, we find everywhere tokens of careful research and conscientious thought. Then there are the two brilliant volumes of M. Villemain's *Histoire de Grégoire VII.*, which, begun so long ago as 1827, were not given to the world until 1873—two years after the author's death. M. Villemain, we are told by his editor, regarded this work as pre-eminently his contribution to history ("comme son œuvre historique"), and no doubt it is in many respects a very

valuable contribution. Nowhere, perhaps, do his characteristic excellences come out more strikingly than in some portions of it—for example, in his description of the death of St. Leo IX., or in his account of the great Countess Matilda—his taste for picturesque details, the vividness and beauty of his colouring, the luminousness and distinctness of his images. But on the other hand, he has great defects. He is no psychologist. He draws from without rather than within. He never loses himself in his subject; he displays little of that self-effacement which allows events to tell their own story. M. Taine has somewhere remarked, with much happiness, that the historian should have in him five or six poets. M. Villemain has but one; and that is a poet after the order of Lucan, not of Virgil—a rhetorician rather than a creator. Then, again, his purely critical faculty cannot be ranked very high. Thus he receives as genuine, apparently without misgiving, the famous *Dictatus Papæ*, the spuriousness of which, pretty generally recognized by the most competent of the earlier critics, has been conclusively established by Giesebrecht; while his introductory discourse on the history of the Papacy certainly reveals both a very defective acquaintance with the mass of authorities he cites, and a very imperfect power of appreciating evidence.[1] Another posthumous contribution to the

[1] I feel that one ought not to express this opinion without assigning grounds for it. Adequately to do that would require a volume. Here, in a note, I can only adduce one or two examples

history of Gregory VII. is supplied by the sixth and seventh volumes of M. de Montalembert's *Moines*

of the faults which I censure. Thus M. Villemain writes: "Le Concile de Nicée, sous l'inspiration de Constantine, qui voulait que l'Église eût des assemblées, mais pas d'autres chefs, que lui-même, avait déclaré le patriarche d'Alexandrie égal en honneurs et en privilèges à l'évêque de Rome" (vol. i. p. 47). He is, of course, referring to the sixth canon of the Nicene Council, but it is difficult to believe that he can have read it. That canon merely provides for the maintenance of the ancient custom whereby the great Sees of Alexandria and Antioch exercised over the whole civil diocese, the one of Egypt, the other of the East, original jurisdiction, similar to that exercised by the Church of Rome in the West. There is not one syllable in the canon about equality in honours and privileges, and the declaration which the Council made was of nothing new (as M. Villemain implies) but merely of an existing fact. Here is the text of the canon: Τὰ ἀρχαῖα ἔθη κρατείτω, τὰ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ, καὶ Λιβύῃ, καὶ Πενταπόλει ὥστε τὸν Ἀλεξανδρείας ἐπίσκοπον πάντων τούτων ἔχειν τὴν ἐξουσίαν, ἐπειδὴ καὶ τῷ ἐν τῇ Ρώμῃ ἐπισκόπῳ τοῦτο σύνηθές ἐστιν· ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ κατὰ τὴν Ἀντιόχειαν, καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἄλλαις ἐπαρχίαις, τὰ πρεσβεῖα σώζεσθαι ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις. Καθόλου δὲ πρόδηλον ἐκεῖνο, ὅτι, εἴ τις χωρὶς τῆς γνώμης τοῦ μητροπολίτου γένοιτο ἐπίσκοπος, τὸν τοιοῦτον ἡ μεγάλη σύνοδος ὥρισε μὴ δεῖν εἶναι ἐπίσκοπον, ἐὰν μέντοι τῇ κοινῇ πάντων ψήφῳ εὐλόγῳ οὔσῃ καὶ κατὰ κανόνα ἐκκλησιαστικὸν δύο ἢ τρεῖς διὰ οἰκείαν φιλονεικίαν ἀντιλέγωσι, κρατείτω ἡ τῶν πλειόνων ψῆφος. (Mansi, t. ii. p. 669.) In another place (vol. i. p. 72) M. Villemain quotes a passage from a letter of St. Augustine, in which the saint relates a saying of St. Ambrose: "Cum Romam venio jejuno sabbatis. Cum Mediolani sum non jejuno. Sic enim tu (it is Monica who is addressed) ad quam forte ecclesiam veneris ejus morem serva." From this he infers, "l'autorité de la chaire de Milan égalait presque celle de Rome." To show the absurdity of the inference it may be sufficient to say that Cardinal Manning would give of himself in the present day an account as to this matter similar to that given by St. Ambrose. "I abstain from flesh on Saturday when I am in Rome because it is the custom there. I do not abstain on Saturday in England because it is not the English custom." Therefore (according to M. Villemain) the authority of the See of Westminster almost equals that of Rome.

d'Occident,—volumes which, left incomplete and unrevised by their illustrious author, are hardly a fair subject for rigorous criticism. Here it must suffice to say of them that they are marked by the same warmth of sympathy, indefatigable industry, and lofty thought which distinguish the earlier portions of his unfinished task, while they cannot be said to be exempt from what has been called the religious romanticism which was, as it would seem, a natural constituent of his beautiful and noble character. Among English writers upon the life and times of Hildebrand, the first place must still, I think, be conceded to the late Mr. Bowden. He has not, indeed, the brilliancy, of Dean Milman; but he is far more accurate, and far less under the influence of that tendency to "people past history with phantasms, and colour it with lines which belong to our own times"—to borrow a phrase from Milman's distinguished successor—which so greatly mars the work

Once more. It is not easy to imagine how any one who had really studied the ecclesiastical history of the early Christian centuries could have written the following sentence: "Ouvrez l'histoire de la grande révolution chrétienne, parcourez les monuments originaux des premiers siècles, l'évêché de Rome y remplit d'abord peu de place" (vol. i. p. 2). If any one thing is clear where so much is dark, it is that throughout those ages, although genius was with the Eastern Church, authority was with the Western. "Dès le II^e^ siècle, Rome exerça une action décisive sur l'Église de Jésus," writes M. Renan (*Conférences d'Angleterre*, p. 12); and the fact is incontestable, whatever explanation we may put upon it. As this brilliant writer elsewhere remarks: "L'esprit qui, en 1870, fera proclamer l'infaillibilité du pape, se reconnaît dès la fin du II^e^ siècle à des signes déjà reconnaissables."—*Ibid.* p. 172.

of the historian of *Latin Christianity*. Mr. Bowden, indeed, wrote forty years ago, and wrote, too, under the influence of an unhistorical ecclesiastical theory which presented a very specious and winning appearance on paper, and which had not then been tried and found wanting as a fact. This must be remembered when his volumes are read. But bearing this in mind, and making all proper allowance for it, we may say that still the book merits the praise bestowed upon it by Cardinal Newman when it first appeared, as very learned and well arranged, as bringing out the facts with great distinctness and perspicuity, as—no slight merit—sending the reader away with a very definite impression upon his mind of what has passed through it.

So much concerning the principal authorities upon the Life and Pontificate of Gregory VII. In what I am about to write, I shall avail myself of them as the occasion demands, as well as of the invaluable collection of Gregory's Epistles[1] which has come down to us—invaluable, because it reveals to us, as nothing else could, his real mind.

No adequate appreciation of Hildebrand's work is possible unless we realize the conditions in which it

[1] They may be read, together with his *Diplomata Pontificia*, his *Acts*, as given by the Bollandists, including his Life, by Paulus Bernriedensis, and other important documents relating to him, in vol. cxlviii. of Migne's *Patrologia Latina*. Most valuable information about Gregory and his times, let me add, will be found in a form easily accessible, in vol. i. of Watterich's *Romanorum Pontificum Vitæ ab æqualibus conscriptæ*.

was done. And this is no easy matter, so wide is the difference between the Europe of the eleventh century and the Europe of the nineteenth, in many of the things that most largely make up human existence. The thoughts of the men of that age about this life and the next, their social relations, their political organizations, their standard of rights and duties, are as far removed from ours as is their speech, and require the like careful study to become intelligible. When Hildebrand was born, somewhere in the second decade of the eleventh century, England, notwithstanding the constructive work of the kings of the line of Egbert, can hardly be said to have been fully welded into a single nation. It was Cnut, the organizer also, in great measure, of the Scandinavian States of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, over which he likewise ruled, whose reign of twenty years, from 1017 to 1035, began among us that definitive work of consolidation, which two centuries of foreign kings, Norman and Angevin, were to carry forward—a work the result of which should be to make "our Britain whole within herself." On the Continent of Europe a similar process was taking place. The previous century had witnessed the dissolution of the inheritance of the Great Charles. And now was the time of re-formation. For nearly eighty years after the division of 887, the Holy Roman Empire was "in a kind of abeyance." It was in the second half of the tenth century that it began to shape itself definitely as a German power under the Saxon Otto — the

Regnum Teutonicum, its backbone, if I may so speak, although the iron crown of Lombardy, imposed at Milan, was a splendid accessory, and the Imperial diadem, bestowed at Rome, conferred the prestige of the most sacred and venerable of secular titles, the incommunicable majesty of the Cæsars. France, in the sense which the word conveys to us, as yet was not. The kingdom of the West Franks, Karolingia, had, indeed, begun to receive this name. And it is from the death of Louis le Fainéant, the last of the Carlovingians, and the election of the first of the Capets, Hugh, that the beginning of the French State must be traced. But at the date of which I am speaking—the date of Hildebrand's birth—Robert II., who ruled in Paris, reigned directly only over the royal domain, which "took in the greater part of the Isle of France, the territory to which the old name specially clung, and the greater part of the later government of Orleans, besides some outlying fiefs holding directly from the King,"[1] while around his territories were grouped the great feudatory Dukes and Counts of Normandy, Brittany, and Champagne, of Burgundy and Aquitaine, of Toulon, Gascony, and Flanders. The process of absorption whereby "the King of the Franks" was to add to his own dominions the lands of one great feudatory after another, and to

[1] Freeman's *Historical Geography of Europe*, vol. i. p. 330. Although I differ from Mr. Freeman on some very important points, I gladly bear testimony to the merits of this admirable work, which no student of European history should be without.

aggrandize them by the acquisition of foreign territory, had not yet begun; indeed, the ruler of the great Norman fief, which, cut off a century before from the duchy of France, extended from the Epte to the sea westwards, was a far more powerful potentate than his royal suzerain, while the Norsemen over whom he ruled, although forgetful of the language, the habits, and the traditions of their pirate ancestors, yet retained those ineradicable characteristics of their race, that restless energy, that enthusiasm for the ideal, that dauntless daring, that "Berserker rage," which were so potently to influence the course of European history. Spain, like France, was still a thing of the future, only its nucleus existing in the States which had sprung up as the tide of Saracen invasion had receded from the Iberian peninsula. In Eastern Europe the monarchy which took its name from the recently converted Slave people who dwelt in the valley of the Vistula—the Polacks, people of the plains—was shaping itself under the great king Boleslas. And Turanian Hungary, which had received the faith about the same time as Poland, was being wrought into a Christian polity by a still more famous monarch—St. Stephen. Of the empire of New Rome, now practically Greek, I need not speak. It lay outside the limits of Latin Christendom, as also did Russia, Greek too in religion and civilization, and hardly as yet accounted a European power.

Such, in brief outline, is the aspect which the

map of Europe exhibits as the eleventh century opens. Everywhere the new nations are struggling into full life, assuming the forms, distinct though inchoate, which they were to present in the modern world. So that we have, in some sort,—

> "The baby figure of the giant mass
> Of things to come at large."

And as we can now see, with the wisdom easy of attainment after the event, the great question was in what mould these embryonic and plastic organisms should be cast. One note of the times, which should not be lost sight of, is the singular identity of ideas, of institutions, of habits which prevailed among the various European peoples. Throughout Christendom the public order was substantially of one type. Society was organized upon a definite set of principles; principles as far removed from those upon which the ancient world had rested, as from those upon which the modern world is based. The Roman theory of sovereignty, in the shape which it assumed under the Emperors, meant the concentration of all power in the hands of one man. The old republican forms, indeed, remained. The nominal authority was still that of the "Senatus Populusque Romanus." Here was the source and fount whence the prerogatives of the Ruler were derived. But the shadow of this great name merely furnished the thinnest veil to the supreme irresponsible dictatorship wielded by Cæsar as the perpetual and indefeasible representative of

the people.[1] Nor was the imperial power alone political. It was also religious. It extended into what we know as the domain of conscience. Not only was the Emperor, as Pontifex Maximus, the supreme head of all cults; he was also the final arbiter of the moral law, which, as it is needless to say, was a separate matter from the worships of pagan antiquity. Nor was his apotheosis a mere idle imagination of servile flattery.

> "Cœlo Tonantem credidimus Jovem
> Regnare: præsens divus habebitur
> Augustus:"

sings the poet. But "the present deity" was the real one, in whom men believed and before whom they trembled; and, as time went on, the Olympian Thunderer became more and more shadowy, until, a century later, the satirist could affirm that only babes believed in him. It is not my purpose here to relate how this great fabric of imperial power fell, crushed out, so to speak, as the spiritual empire of the Christian Church, in which it rightly discerned its irreconcilable foe, rose slowly into ecumenical proportions—like the stone cut without hands, seen in the vision of the Hebrew seer—while the vigorous hordes of barbarians from the forests of Germany beat upon it from without. It fell, and great was the fall of it. But long

[1] So Justinian, *Inst.* i. tit. 3, 6:—"Quod principi placuit legis habet vigorem quum lege regia quæ de ejus imperio lata est, populus ei et in eum omne suum imperium et potestatem concessit."

before its final catastrophe the Church had stripped it of its moral and spiritual authority. To her the "præsens divus" of the Roman poet was no divinity at all, but a type and forerunner of Anti-Christ—"that man of sin who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God or is worshipped: so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." Even so early as the second century we find Tertullian, with a boldness which it is difficult for us adequately to appreciate, writing, "I pray for the Emperor, for his armies, for the security of the Empire, for the peace of the world. As to other things I am independent of him. For my Lord is One, the Omnipotent and Eternal Lord, and the selfsame is his Lord also."[1] Here is, in few words, the cause for which the martyrs victoriously died. The enfranchisement of the human conscience from secular chains was the gift which, purchased at the price of their own blood, they gave unto men. Thus was the State shorn of half its ancient domain. And as the years went on, the new political order, of Teutonic origin, but largely affected by Roman influences, which had arisen and was spread through Europe by the beginning of the eleventh century, completed the work of dissolution by breaking up the unity of civil authority. Charles the Great had dreamed of an imperial realm, in which he as Emperor and the Pope as Pontifex Maximus, the first of his prelates, should share the supreme rule that had been concentrated in

[1] *Apolog.*

the hands of earlier Cæsars. His vast design received but an imperfect accomplishment. The new political order was not to be cast into the old mould, nor were the relations of the *sacerdotium* and the *imperium* to be such as Charles had supposed. As one after another of his successors sinks under the weight of the Imperial crown, the union between the Empire and the Papacy becomes weaker, while everywhere the tendency is to substitute in the secular order a hierarchy of powers for the one supreme direct ruler. The ninth and tenth centuries are the period of a social and political revolution:

"Magnus ab integro sæclorum nascitur ordo."

That new great world order was the feudal system, and its dominant note was, if I may use a modern word, Positivism.[1] The Empire, despotism as it was, yet was avowedly based upon the spiritual power of law, and professedly derived from popular delegation; and so was in itself a confession, however hypocritical, of those rights of the immaterial part of man's nature, the recognition of which is the only true safeguard of individual freedom. Feudalism recognized little else than matter and force. It is of much importance that

[1] It is necessary "to speak by the book" in making mention of Positivism. Let me, therefore, say that I use the word in the sense indicated by M. Littré: "La philosophie positive est l'ensemble du savoir humain disposé suivant un certain ordre. . . . . Mais comment définerons-nous le savoir humain? Nous le définerons l'étude des forces qui appartiennent la matière et des conditions ou lois qui régissent ces forces."—*Auguste Comte et la Philosophie Positive*, p. 42.

its true character should be accurately apprehended. It arose in an age full of violence and confusion, when might was well-nigh equivalent to right, when the great idea of law seemed to have perished, and, with law, liberty, of which it is the life. "By liberty," Bossuet truly says, "the Romans, like the Greeks, meant a state where men were subject only to law, and where the law was more powerful than men." It is manifest that where the servile maxim prevailed, "Quidquid principi placuit legis habet vigorem," liberty thus conceived of was ill-assured. Still, even in the darkest times of antique Cæsarism, the idea of the supremacy of law as the guarantee of personal freedom remained. In feudalism—taken by itself—that idea was wanting. It was a military or materialistic reorganization of society broken into chaotic fragments by the disappearance of the great Imperial power. Its tendency was to annihilate individual rights, to shut men up in categories of dependence, to make the arbitrary will of another take the place of "that will which is the norm or rule for all men." M. Taine has observed that voluntary engagement was the only root ("la racine unique") of the feudal system.[1] It is a saying which certainly requires much modification, to bring it into accord with the facts. True it is that "the sphere occupied in them by contract principally distinguishes feudal institutions from

[1] "Lorsqu'on considère la société féodale à son origine on s'aperçoit qu'elle a pour racine unique . . . . l'engagement volontaire."—*Nouveaux Essais de Critique et d'Histoire*, p. 200.

the unadulterated usages of primitive tribes." But it is also true that "a fief was an organically complete brotherhood of associates whose proprietary and personal rights were inextricably blended together;" that "it had much in common with an Indian village community, and more in common with a Highland clan;" that "the lord had many of the characteristics of a patriarchal chieftain."[1] The very essence of the feudal system is that every one was the man of some one else. The good vassal was its highest social type. Inflexible—if I may so speak, canine—fidelity to one's lord was the supreme virtue. It is extremely difficult for us in the present day to realize the all-absorbing closeness of the relation involved in feudal fealty. A book which happens to lie before me as I write—Gower's *Confessio Amantis*—may serve to supply an illustration of it before I pass on. The poet tells us that it was "for King Richard's sake" that he wrote: that is, upon a suggestion thrown out by the King—

> "To whom belongeth my legeaunce
> With all min herte's obeisaunce
> In all that ever a lege man
> Unto his king may don or can."

Such expressions as these, if we really understand them, will avail better than many a ponderous dissertation to reveal the true spirit, the *ethos* of feudalism. I do not know that it is too much to say that to a large extent the system was an undoing of

[1] Maine's *Ancient Law*, p. 365.

the work of so many generations of Roman jurisconsults, and a going back from contract to status as the foundation of civil relations. It was a vast military and territorial aristocracy, in which the ideas of individual freedom and political right had become merged in the relations between lord and vassal. Bishop Stubbs well describes it as "a graduated system of jurisdiction based on land tenure, in which every lord judged, commanded, and taxed the class next below him; in which abject slavery formed the lowest, and irresponsible tyranny the highest grade; in which private war, private coinage, and private prisons took the place of the imperial institutions of power."[1] And, as this learned and careful writer elsewhere remarks, "Land has become the sacramental tie of all public relations. The poor man depends on the rich, not as his chosen patron, but as the owner of the land that he cultivates, the lord of the court to which he does service, the leader whom he is bound to follow to the host."[2] Such were the main features of the public order which had sprung up upon the ruins of the majestic fabric of Roman polity and Roman law. But to prevent a misapprehension which I should regret, let me point out that I recognize as fully as any one the beneficent work which feudalism had to do in the modern world. While dissenting as widely as possible from the positivist school of historians, I acknowledge a profound truth in the canon that everything which has

[1] *Constitutional History*, vol. i. pp. 255-6. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 167.

existed has had its reason for existing. Feudalism was a stern schoolmaster to the new nationalities, coming to them with a rod, and by no means in the spirit of meekness. But its discipline was not less salutary than rude. It was, to borrow the words of M. Thierry, "a necessary revolution," "a natural bond of defence between the lords and the neighbouring peasants;" and, guided by religion, it was the instrument of the slow but sure elevation of the peasants. It found them, for the most part, slaves. It led them, through serfdom, to enfranchisement.

For feudality was not the only great fact of the ages which witnessed the rise of the new nations. Side by side with it had grown up the great ecclesiastical system by which Europe had been formed into a spiritual commonwealth called Christendom. The principles upon which the Church was based were precisely those most urgently needed to correct in the world the evils of the feudal organization. Feudalism tended to the annihilation of the individual. The Church taught, and could not keep from teaching, as her first postulate, the supreme worth of human personality. Feudalism, essentially aristocratic, set the greatest store upon "the glories of our birth and state." The Church maintained the absolute equality of all men, not in secular rights, as the sophists of 1789 feigned, but in their common spiritual nature, in their common dependence upon and accountability to God. The supreme argument of feudalism was the sword. The Church wielded

mightier weapons, not carnal but spiritual, the terrors of that Divine Law, ruling over all, which has its sanctions in man's conscience and instinct of retribution. The highest ideal of feudalism was the loyal and valiant soldier, the *probus miles.* The Church set forward the example of nobler heroes—tender maidens like St. Agnes, courtesans like St. Afra, beggars like St. Alexius — who "by faith subdued kingdoms, wrought justice . . . . out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in war, put to flight the armies of the aliens." Feudalism sternly forbad the individual to break "his birth's invidious bar." The Church proclaimed loudly the doctrine of a career for talents. Her constitution was still largely democratic. The *suffragium de persona*, which the general body of the faithful had, from the earliest times, possessed in the choice of their pastors, however intermittently exercised, yet subsisted as a fact. Her religious houses were so many little republics scattered up and down Europe. Her councils and synods were real deliberative assemblies. Her free institutions were the germ and norm of the civil franchises which were afterwards to spring up. Once more. Feudalism was, by its very nature, disruptive; its tendency to universal war; its practical effect to render *peregrinus* as of old a synonym for *hostis.*[1] But as political unity perished from Europe a higher unity developed, and "from the

[1] "Hostis enim apud majores nostros is dicebatur, quem nunc peregrinum dicimus."—*Cicero de Officiis*, l. i. c. 12.

bosom of the most frightful disorder the world has ever seen, arose the largest and purest idea, perhaps, which ever drew men together—the idea of a spiritual society." [1]

Of that society the Roman Church was the centre and head. No period in ecclesiastical history is more worthy of careful and exact study—of much more careful and exact study than it has as yet received—than the period between the death of Charles the Great and the rise of Hildebrand. The immediate effect of the departure of the great Frankish monarch from the scene where he had played so high a part was to add vastly to the authority of the Roman Pontiff. Relieved from the shadow of his great name, the Apostolic See grew into a hitherto unknown strength. "Charles," remarks M. Villemain in his rhetorical way, "in decorating the Pope with so many titles, had merely wished to raise a gilt statue which should place the imperial crown upon his own head. After Charles, when his empire was ruled with a feebler hand and divided by factions, the Pontifical statue came to life, and wanted to reign." [2] The similitude is striking, and so, helpful to the imagination. But it must not be pressed too far. M. Villemain certainly underrates the ecumenical jurisdiction, the exercise of which by the Popes is clearly traceable from the dawn of ecclesiastical history. It is not too much to say that, as in what has been called the "happy anarchy" of the nascent

[1] Guizot, Lec. XII. [2] Vol. i. p. 145.

Christian kingdom we trace the rudimentary forms of the polity which was to be, the most salient fact discernible is—to use the phrase of St. Irenæus—the *potentior principalitas* of the Roman See. It is as certain that, "as the Church grew into form, so did the power of the Pope develop."[1] We may give what explanation we will of the fact. But no well-instructed scholar will question it. And it is equally beyond question that long before the time of Charles, "the centralizing process by which the See of St. Peter became the sovereign head of Christendom"[2] was in all essentials complete. Not the less clear, however, is it that in the half-century from the death of Charles, in 814, to the election of Pope St. Nicholas I., in 858, the nature, extent, and attributes of the Papal sovereignty were more clearly, precisely, and universally apprehended. And no one can read the life of that great ecclesiastical statesman, as we find it in the graphic narrative of his contemporary, Anastasius, without feeling that he realized the aim and ideal of the supreme Pontificate in a way untrodden by any of his predecessors. His short reign of nine years is the translation into fact of the ecclesiastical system set forth in the decretals of Isidore—documents which, whatever the real history of them, though false in form, are certainly true in substance. And so Neander: "The pseudo-Isidore

[1] Cardinal Newman's *Development of Christian Doctrine*, p. 154, ed. 1878.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 155.

was, at all events, but the organ of a tendency of the religious and ecclesiastical spirit which prevailed among the great masses of the men among whom he lived. He had no idea of introducing a new code, but only of presenting, in a connected form, the principles which must be recognized by every one as correct, and on which depended the well-being of the Church."[1]

As a matter of fact, and apart from all theories, the close union thus subsisting between the Roman See and the several Churches throughout Europe constituted the true strength of the spiritualty, and offered the sole guarantee for its independence. The Church is in the world, and it is impossible for her, in any age, to escape the influence of contemporary events and institutions. And it was the tendency of feudalism, as it is the tendency of every great movement in the public order, to bring all things into subjection unto itself; to bend them into its own mould, or if it cannot so bend them, to break them in pieces as out of harmony with the age and as obstacles to its own development. How nearly feudalism triumphed over the ecclesiastical element in the two centuries between Nicholas I. and Gregory VII., the history of the Papacy itself may serve to show. I am well aware that the estimate long current of the saddest portion of that period, the hundred years which closed the first Christian millennium, needs large qualification to make it just. Iron,

[1] *Church History*, vol. vi. p. 7, Eng. tr. Bohn.

leaden, dark as that age was, it was the time when the monastic orders were informed by fresh energy and sanctity, and the great Cluniac foundation supplied the norm for the reformed religious life; when the new school of Latin lyric poetry was maturing its laws and developing its capacities, and already giving a foretaste of the glories to come in the strains of sweet singers like Godescalcus and St. Notker; while in architecture it is memorable for the introduction of the acute arch. It was the age of Theodora and Marzoria, but it was also the age of St. Romuald and St. Nilus. It is darkened by the conspicuous badness of many of the Pontiffs who disgraced the Apostolic throne,—"they lived for the most part rather like monsters or wild beasts than bishops," is Mabillon's judgment of them,—but it is relieved by the exemplary virtues of others. Against a Stephen VII., guilty of the brutal indecency of dragging the body of a dead predecessor through the streets, may be set such a holy and humble man of heart as Leo VII.; against a John XII., accused publicly, and apparently on too good grounds, of "homicide, perjury, sacrilege, of incest with his relatives and two sisters, of drinking wine in honour of the devil, and of invoking in gambling Jupiter, Venus, and other demons," may be set a John X.,[1] no saint,

[1] Baronius judges this Pope severely, and, as Gregorovius shows, unfairly:

> "Summus erat Pastor tunc temporis Urbe Joannes
> Officio affatim clarus sophiaque repletus,"

indeed, but apparently a virtuous man, zealous for the restoration of religious discipline, and the deliverer of his subjects from the Saracen invader. But what I am concerned to point out is that whether the Popes were good or bad, they were penetrated by the feudal spirit. This John X., just mentioned, was, as Muratori notes, the first to give the world example of a Roman Pontiff at the head of an army. And John XII., a man of blood from his youth, made himself notorious, in a by no means tender-hearted age, for the savagery with which he waged war and punished his enemies. It is curious that when the messengers from the Council convoked by the Emperor Otto to rescue the Papacy from its abasement sought the Pontiff in his camp at Tivoli, they were told that "pharetratus jam in campestrem abierat"; or, as we should say, that His Holiness had just gone out shooting.[1] Nor did Otto's reformation unfeudalize the Papacy or breathe into its occupants a spirit ecclesiastical. He delivered it, indeed, more or less, from its bondage to the Tusculan barons, whose unprincipled ambition and shameless intrigues had been the immediate cause of its degradation. But he brought it into captivity to the Imperial authority. The Pontiffs changed masters;

is the account given of him by the contemporary author of the poem *De Laudibus Berengarii.*

[1] The fate of this unexemplary Pontiff, perhaps the most singular Vicar of Christ the world has ever seen, is thus related: "Dum se cujusdam viri uxore oblectaret, in temporibus adeo a diabolo est percussus, ut inter dierum octo spatium eodem sit vulnere mortuus."—*Contin. Luitprand*, l. vi. c. 11.

but they did not change manners. Violence and impurity reigned in the Apostolic throne no less after than before the establishment of the new relations between the tiara and the imperial crown. But violence and impurity were not the only scandals which disgraced the Chair of Peter. Simony was no less conspicuous, and it passed into a proverb that everything in Rome had its price. The eleventh century, indeed, opens auspiciously with the too short Pontificate of the learned and virtuous Gerbert (Sylvester II.), the fitting successor of the learned and virtuous, but severe,[1] Gregory V.; and in 1012 Benedict VIII. assumes the tiara, a Pope who, as Giesbrecht observes, "recognized it as his mission to provide for the welfare of all Western Christianity, and who feared neither weariness nor exertion to restore to his high office the value it had lost."[2] Still it is to the early portion of this eleventh century that we must go for the most scandalous examples of simoniacal vice in the Roman See. John XIX., who had himself, when a mere layman, purchased the Popedom upon the death of Benedict VIII.,[3] offered to confer the title of Universal Bishop upon the

[1] "Durus ille Pontifex," Damiani calls him, and certainly not without reason, if the account is true which has come down to us of his treatment of the anti-Pope, Philagathus.

[2] *Gesch. der Deutschen Kaiserzeit*, vol. ii. p. 172.

[3] "Largitione pecuniæ repente ex laicali ordine neophytus constitutus præsul . . . . ex laico (nefas dictu) est transformatus in Papam."—Baronius, ad ann. 1024, quoting Glaber, a writer of that age.

Patriarch of Constantinople for a pecuniary consideration. His successor, Benedict IX., stated to have been ordained at the age of twelve, after a career of which, according to the chronicler, the chief incidents were "multa turpia adulteria, et homicidia manibus suis perpetrata,"[1] resolved to wed his first cousin, and finding that public opinion would not tolerate a married Pontiff, sold the Papacy to John Gratian, and consecrated him with his own hands by the name of Gregory VI., in 1044. It is under this Pope, whose virtues were singularly out of keeping with the manner of his elevation, that we first find Hildebrand at Rome in an official capacity. He is described as the Pontiff's chaplain (*capellanus*).

So much as to the condition of the Papacy in the century and a half succeeding the death of St. Nicholas I. It still maintained the *sacramentum unitatis*. But how feebly, how precariously, is obvious. Thus was the head affected by the evils of feudality. The members suffered still more.[2] The tendency

[1] Bonizo, *apud* Watterich, *Pont. Roman. Vitæ*, vol. i. p. 75.

[2] Bruno, in his life of St. Leo IX., gives the following account of the condition of Christendom at the period of that Pontiff's election in 1048: "Mundus totus in maligno positus est, defecerat sanctitas, justitia perierat et veritas sepulta est: regnabat injustitia, avaritia dominabatur, Simon Magus ecclesiam possidebat, episcopi et sacerdotes voluptatibus et fornicationi dediti sunt. Non erubescebant sacerdotes uxores ducere, palam nuptias facere, nefanda matrimonia contrahebant et legibus eas dotabant cum quibus secundum leges, nec in una domo simul habitare debebant. Sed quod his omnibus deterius est vix aliquis inveniebatur qui vel simoniacus non esset, vel a simoniacis ordinatus non fuisset. Talis erat ecclesia,

everywhere had been to convert the bishops into feudal barons, and the transformation had to a very large extent been effected. Under the successors of the great Charles, the episcopate had practically become in large measure a royal donative, and abbacies, like Sees, had been conferred by the nomination of the prince. The spiritual character of the higher clergy was obscured by their employment as councillors of State, ministers of princes, governors of provinces. They became more familiar with the helmet than the mitre. St. Fulbert of Chartres testifies[1] that he knew prelates better acquainted with the laws of war than most secular potentates. And with the occupations of feudal lords they assumed their way of living. For the first time in ecclesiastical history we read of bishopesses (*episcopissæ*) and of the transmission to these women's sons of their father's office. The same evil, as was natural, affected more sorely the inferior clergy. The priest's concubine, whether he had gone through the form of marriage with her or not, was almost a recognized member of the sacerdotal household; and the appellation "son of a priest" took high rank among vituperative expressions: it may be regarded, indeed, as the equivalent of a term attributive of canine maternity, much in favour as an opprobrious epithet among mariners in our own day. Simony

tales erat episcopi et sacerdotes, tales et ipsi Romani Pontifices, qui omnes alios illuminare debebant."—*Apud* Watterich, *Pont. Roman. Vitæ*, vol. i. p. 96.

[1] *Ep.* 112. "De episcopis ad bellum procedentibus." Migne, *Pat Lat.*, vol. cxli. p. 255.

gradually became universal. At the beginning of the eleventh century the traffic in livings was conducted as openly and unblushingly throughout Europe as it is conducted in the nineteenth-century England. And simony, as the natural consequence and companion of incontinence, may, like it, be referred directly to the invasion of the ecclesiastical order by the feudal spirit. Feudal benefices, like ecclesiastical, had originally been mere life estates. The process by which they at first became heritable, and then alienable, is so well known in this country, through our real property law, that I need not dwell upon it. The same process was going on in the feudalized Church. The prospect before the world in the earlier part of the eleventh century apparently was that the spiritualty would be merged in the feudal system, that the priesthood would become a caste, holding churches and lands on a secular tenure, and gradually, like secular holders, acquiring power of alienation. It is not too much to say that, if this result had been attained, the whole future of Europe would have been disastrously different. For it would have meant the extinction of the Church as a society perfect and complete in herself, and with her the extinction of the great principles of which she was the sole representative in the world—the principles of the supremacy of law; of the freedom of conscience; of the real equality of all men; of their brotherhood in the Christian faith; of the essentially fiduciary and limited nature of human authority. That these great ideas were not blotted out from the

mind of the new nationalities, was, humanly speaking, the work of one man, and that man was Hildebrand. The Pontificate of Gregory VII. is the turning-point of the Middle Ages.

It was in a carpenter's shop, in the little Tuscan town of Soano, that the future Pontiff first saw the light. An attempt was made in after-years, by—to use a phrase of Mr. Carlyle's—"genealogists of the flunkey species," to trace his lineage to the noble family of the Aldobrandini. But it would seem to be beyond question that, as we read in a remarkable letter[1] addressed to him by a contemporary abbot, upon his elevation to the Pontificate, he was "vir de plebe," fit origin for the great champion of religious democracy in the Middle Ages, "the holy athlete of the Christian faith,"[2] as Dante sings, who was to maintain the cause of the poor against the violence of a military aristocracy. His father, the carpenter, had a brother, or a kinsman, who was the head of the monastery of St. Mary on the Aventine. Thither Hildebrand was sent, when a mere boy, to learn the liberal arts and moral discipline. There he was first brought into contact with John Gratian, arch-priest of the Roman Church, who was subsequently to be his first Papal patron; and there he made the acquaintance of Odilo, Abbot of Clugny, a "saint of gentleness

[1] Quoted by the Bollandists in his "Acts." William of Malmesbury speaks of him as "despicabilis parentelæ."—*Apud* Pertz., *Monumenta Germaniæ Historica*, vol. xii. p. 474.

[2] "Della fede cristiana il santo atleta."—*Paradiso*, c. xii.

and meekness," whose playful answer to those that blamed him for showing too much mercy in the execution of his office, "If I am to be damned, I would rather it were for excess of pitifulness than for excess of severity," is in itself a revelation of his beautiful and winning character. To the great religious house over which Odilo ruled, so famous for the magnificence of its church, the exactness of its ritual, the strictness of its discipline, Hildebrand migrated in entering upon manhood.[1] He remained there for several years, drinking more deeply at its abundant founts of the ecclesiastical spirit with which, as his biographers testify, he had been deeply imbued from his earliest youth. St. Peter Damiani relates in his life of St. Odilo, that the prescient mind of that holy person discerned, by the second sight of sanctity, the coming greatness of the neophyte, applying to him the words spoken of an earlier reformer—"Iste puer magnus erit coram Domino," "He shall be great in the sight of the Lord." Whether he completed his monastic novitiate at Clugny or at St. Mary on the Aventine is uncertain. But, "after some years," as the chronicler writes, with a disdain of exact chronology somewhat uncongenial to the modern mind, he set out to return to Rome, spending some time on his way, probably upon business of his order, at the court of the Emperor Henry III., where he preached a sermon which drew from that prince the testimony, "Never have I heard man proclaim the

[1] "Adolescentiam ingressus."—Paul. Bern.

word of God with so much boldness." It would appear that he reached Rome about the time of the election of his old patron, John Gratian, to the Apostolic throne, under the title of Gregory VI. To the cause of this unfortunate Pontiff he attached himself, and, although only in subdeacon's orders, was appointed, as we have seen, one of the Papal chaplains. The election of Gregory VI. took place in 1044 ; but his predecessor, Benedict IX., finding himself unable to procure the bride he desired, returned to Rome after a three months' absence, and, occupying the Lateran palace, resumed the Pontifical name and functions, while at the same time John, Bishop of Sabina, was designated Pope by a faction of the Roman nobles under the title of Sylvester III. In this scandalous condition of the Papacy the Romans appealed to the Emperor Henry III., a prince of irregular life but animated by deep sentiments of personal religion, who caused a Council to be summoned at Sutri, where Gregory presided, as unquestionably the lawful Pope. Here Benedict withdrew his claims to the Pontificate, and Sylvester was sentenced to degradation from his ecclesiastical rank and to imprisonment for the rest of his life within a monastery. And now Gregory's turn was to come. "Idiota et miræ simplicitatis," as the chronicler[1] calls him with half-contemptuous pity, he acknowledged to the assembled prelates the unworthy means by which

[1] Bonizo, *apud* Watterich *Pont. Roman. Vitæ*, vol. i. p. 85 ; and again, "ut erat idiota omnem suæ electionis pravitatem aperuit."

he had obtained the supreme pastorate, and was exhorted by them to judge himself—no earthly authority being held competent to judge him—so that he might not be judged of the Lord. "Better will it be for thee," they are represented as saying, "to live like the holy Peter, poor in this world and to be blessed in another, than, like the magician Simon, whose example misled thee, to shine in riches *here*, and to receive the sentence of condemnation *there*." The conscience-stricken Pontiff gave ear to them, and thus pronounced sentence upon himself: "I, Gregory, Bishop, servant of the servants of God, adjudge that on account of the most shameful trafficking of heretical simony which, through the craft of the old enemy, crept into my election, I am deprived of the Roman See." The Emperor carried the fallen Pope with him to Germany, and as the chronicler Bonizo relates, "Hildebrand, beloved of God (Deo amabilis), attended him thither, wishing to show reverence towards his lord." Nine months after, the life and troubles of the sixth Gregory came to an end in his place of exile on the banks of the Rhine. Then Hildebrand returned to Clugny. This was in the year 1046.

So far as we can judge, it would seem to have been Hildebrand's intention, at this period, to devote himself thenceforth to the monastic life in that great centre and home of it. Shortly after his return to Clugny he appears to have been elected prior—second or deputy prior, as Mr. Bowden conjectures, probably with correctness—under St. Odilo, who, weighed down

with the burden of eighty-five years, still ruled as abbot the monastic brethren. Two years afterwards, the Papal Chair being vacant, the Emperor Henry III. summoned a council at Worms for the purpose of providing an occupant for it. The conciliar, or rather the imperial choice,[1] fell on Bruno, Bishop of Toul, a kinsman of the Emperor. Bruno, a man of holy life, benign manners, and ecclesiastical spirit, shrank from the dignity, and after praying and fasting for three days made aloud a general confession of his faults to the Council, by way of showing his unworthiness of it (spontaneam suam coram omnibus dixit confessionem). It is worth while to pause for a moment to try to picture to oneself the scene: the assembled prelates sitting round the Emperor in the great church at Worms, and the Pontiff-designate, worn by his *triduo* of mortification and self-examination, tearfully unburdening himself of those "things of man" which "the spirit of a man alone knows," and which, in these days, the devoutest think it penance enough to whisper into the ear of a confessor. Adequately to realize this may help us to understand how far the world has travelled in these last eight centuries. But, as might have been expected, Bruno's humility availed him nothing, and a few days before Christmas,

[1] "Eligitur ab Heinrico presentibus Romanorum legatis," is the account in the *Regesta*. By legati we must understand the deputies of the Roman clergy and people, whose right to elect the Pontiff was never questioned, although at this period it was in practice made void.

A.D. 1048, he was proclaimed Pope, under the title of Leo IX.

Shortly after his election, the new Pontiff was brought into intercourse with Hildebrand. Where they met, whether at Worms, in which city, as some authorities relate,[1] Hildebrand happened to be on certain business of his order; or at Besançon, where, according to the *Regesta*, the new Pope spent the 25th and 26th of December; or at Clugny, whither, as others say, Leo turned aside to visit the new abbot Hugh, who had just been elected in succession to the venerable Odilo, is uncertain, nor does it much matter, although, indeed, the last of these accounts seems to me to be the most probable. What is certain is that from the first the new Pope clave to the young monk and desired to attach him to the Pontifical court. The Abbot Hugh, between whom and Hildebrand there was one of those firm monastic friendships which the cloistral writers delight in comparing to the love of David and Jonathan, "passing the love of women," was unwilling to allow the subprior to depart, and it was with difficulty that his unwillingness was overcome by Leo's entreaties—"quem ab abbate multis precibus vix impetravit," says Bonizo. But a further difficulty arose. Hildebrand had scruples. The election of the Pope had been uncanonical. A contemporary chronicler, who

[1] "Erat ibi monachus, quidam Romanus Hildebrandus nomine," &c.—Bruno, in *Vita S. Leonis PP. IX.*, *apud* Watterich. vol. i. p. 96.

tells us that he derived his information in after-years from Gregory himself, relates in simple language what took place.[1] "I cannot go with you," said Hildebrand, in answer to the invitation of the Pontiff. "Why?" "Because without canonical institution and by the mere warrant of royal and secular power you are going to take possession of the Roman Church." The devout bishop was affected, and, at once laying aside the Pontifical ornaments, assumed the habit of a pilgrim. It was on the 28th of December, 1048, that Leo and Hildebrand rode forth upon their journey to the Papal city. The contrast between the two was striking. Leo, akin to the Emperor, to whom he owed his elevation, trained in the use of arms and conversant with the ways of the Courts, represented, saint as he was, the aristocratic and feudal element in the Catholic hierarchy. And his external appearance was in keeping with this character. "Cestui Pape Lyon," says the French chronicler, "était moult bel et était roux et était de stature seignoriable:"[2] a handsome man, of ruddy countenance, and of lordly proportions. Hildebrand, on the other hand, is represented as little (humuncio exilis staturæ[3]), of mean presence, pot-bellied, and short-legged (ventre lato, crure curto[4]), of tawny

[1] Bruno: *u. s.* "Multa nobis beatus Gregorius Papa narrare solebat," &c.

[2] Aimé de Monte Casino, *l'ystoire de li Normant:* quoted by Watterich vol. i. p. 109, note.

[3] See Pertz., *Monumenta Germaniæ Historica*, vol. xii. p. 474.

[4] *Ibid.* vol. xiii. pp. 654-6.

complexion and black hair[1]—probably a somewhat vulgar-looking ecclesiastic of a type still common enough in Italy, while his origin, as we have seen, was of the humblest, and his training had been of the severest. One thing which the two men had in common was intense religious fervour. For the rest, the highly-born Pontiff might truly have said of his humble companion—

> "he was rich where I was poor,
> And his unlikeness fitted mine."

The iron will, the far-reaching mind, of Hildebrand were the necessary complement of Leo's simplicity and gentleness.[2] The harmlessness of the dove required, for the task that was in hand, to be united to the wisdom of the serpent.

From that day the young subdeacon, soon raised to the cardinalate, and shortly afterwards made archdeacon of the Roman Church, was the trusted friend and counsellor of the Pontiffs who in succession occupied the Apostolic chair, until the time came for him to go up higher and himself sit thereon. With Leo "a new light seemed to have risen for the world," writes one of his contemporaries,[3] and it was Hildebrand who, more than any other, ministered the oil which kept bright the sacred flame during the six years' reign of that Pope, and during the four

[1] See Pertz., *Monumenta Germaniæ Historica*, vol. xvi. p. 69.

[2] "natura simplex atque mitissimus."—Bruno, *u. s.* It is worth noting that he was an accomplished musician.

[3] Desiderius, Abbot of Monte Casino, Gregory VII.'s immediate successor under the title of Victor III. *Dialog.* l. iii.

Pontificates which fill up the nineteen years between it and his own elevation. It is not my object to write his history. I wish rather to indicate the nature of the work which he did, as we, judging of it after the event, see it in its completeness. For be it remembered that we, at this distance of time, may contemplate it in its wholeness and in its fruits, as he did not and could not contemplate it, and so may estimate it more accurately than was possible to him. It is a grave error to impute to him a clear or even a dim prevision of the consequences, nay, of the tendencies, of all his acts. It is a graver error still, and just now a very popular one, to suppose that he nourished "a great scheme of theocratic empire," that he dreamed of "a vast ideal of sacerdotal despotism." The intelligent reader, who wishes to afford his intelligence a fair chance in this matter, should give all diligence to clear his mind of this cant. And I know of nothing which will more effectually help him in doing so than to get, and honestly read for himself, Hildebrand's own letters. It must be invincible prejudice which can refuse to see that the writer lived, as we all live from day to day, dealing with problems as they arose; dealing with them, like us, with reference to the exigencies of the time, the opportunities of the hour, the calculations, the inspirations of the moment, but, unlike most of us, dealing with them too on clear and immutable principles, and with an eye unswervingly fixed upon a definite aim far above "the vulgar

range of low desire." That aim was the liberty of the Church. To free her from the fetters, whether of vice or of earthly tyranny, to vindicate her claims to absolute independence in carrying out her mission, as a society perfect and complete in herself, divine in her constitution, divine in her superiority to the limits of time and space, in the world but not of it, a supernatural order amid the varying forms of secular polity—such was the work which his hands found to do, and at which, for thirty-six years, he laboured with all his might. I shall here proceed to consider how he acquitted himself in this lifelong task, and I shall dwell specially upon these things: his action in the matter of Papal elections, his action against simony and clerical incontinence, and his action against lay investiture.

Hildebrand's great achievement before his own election to the Papacy was his vindication of the freedom of Papal elections. As we have seen, St. Leo IX. had been practically nominated to the Papacy by the Emperor Henry III., although subsequently, under the influence of Hildebrand's counsels, he had submitted himself to the formal choice of the Roman clergy and people. His successor, Victor II., who was also an imperial nominee, appears to have followed the precedent set by his predecessor in demanding the ratification of those with whom the election

canonically rested. On the death of Victor, after a short Pontificate of two years, Hildebrand seems to have thought that the time was come for freeing the Supreme Pastorate from its dependence upon the Emperor. Henry III. was dead, and his successor was a child under the guardianship of the devout Empress Agnes. Upon the recommendation of Hildebrand, Frederick, Abbot of Monte Casino, brother of the powerful and able Godfrey, Duke of Lorraine, was elected Pope under the title of Stephen IX., in due canonical form "by the Roman clergy and people," without foreign intervention; and from that time imperial nominations to the Papacy ceased. But it was not until two years afterwards—that is to say in 1059—that the final and definite steps were taken for placing this important matter upon a sound footing. In that year the newly-elected Pontiff, Nicholas II., acting under the counsels of Hildebrand, formulated, in a Council held in the Lateran, a decree, which from that time to this has in substance regulated the elections to the Papal throne, and which, defying the storms of so many centuries, may justly be regarded as a product of the highest ecclesiastical statesmanship. As M. Mignet has observed, it was destined to put an end to the ancient democratic elections, which had assumed a feudal character since the close of the ninth century, and to the imperial nominations, which had been founded upon the ruin of the feudal elections. "It concentrated the choice of the Popes in a small assembly of high dignitaries of the Roman Church,

who, more enlightened, more prudent, more religiously minded, were better qualified to make a suitable choice. It excluded from it, in some sort, the interested power of the Emperor, and the tumultuary power of the people; for to restrict the one to confirmation, and the other to approval, was in effect to substitute the obligation of assenting for the right of choosing. This system, which was completed by the speedy cessation of the imperial confirmation, and by the somewhat more tardy disuse of popular consent, founded in the college of Cardinals an electoral body, religious and aristocratic, which became the senate of the new Rome, and furnished it with regular principles and precedents of government."[1]

This was the first great reform brought about by Hildebrand, the first definitive victory won by him over the feudalizing spirit in the ecclesiastical order, the first decisive recovery of ground lost by the Church. It might at first seem as though a sacrifice of the popular principle were involved in it, as though it meant the transfer of the appointment to the first See in Christendom from the free suffrages of the faithful to a close corporation. But in truth it was only the shadow of freedom which was sacrificed, while the substance was gained. In the condition of things which prevailed in that age, with feudal barons upon the one hand and a feudal Emperor on the other, the spontaneous action of the Christian democracy which had so largely influenced episcopal elections at

[1] *Journal des Savants*, Jan. 1861, p. 23

Rome, as elsewhere, in earlier ages, was no longer possible. And the Sacred College was no caste assembly. Its doors stood open to all Christendom. It was really representative of all that was best, not only in the Roman Patriarchate, but in the universal Church. It was, indeed, an aristocracy, but an aristocracy in the noblest and truest sense; not of birth, but of merit; ever accessible to high desert; the flower and crown of the liberty, equality, and fraternity, which in those days were found in the Christian Church and nowhere else. Nay, are they in truth found elsewhere now? Are not the tawdry and blood-stained images of them paraded by Jacobinism, mere untrue figures of things absent, senseless, lifeless abstractions, mocking and maleficent shadows which, usurping the majesty of great forms, deprive men of "the sovereignty of reason," and put

> "toys of desperation,
> Without more motive, into every brain"?

These are, indeed, questions which may make us pause. But to return to Hildebrand.

It is certain that the independence of Papal elections secured by the decree of Nicholas II. was a measure of the highest importance; and that without it the rest of Hildebrand's work would—so far as we can judge—have been done in vain. It is curious, however, that upon the occasion of his own election that decree was to a considerable extent infringed. It was on the 22nd of April, 1073, that the strange and striking scene took place of which so vivid an

account has come down to us. The obsequies of Alexander II., dead only the day before, were being celebrated in St. John Lateran, and Hildebrand, as Archdeacon, was taking his appointed part in the sacred rites, when suddenly there was a great multitude of the Roman clergy and people in the church crying out and saying, "Blessed Peter has chosen Hildebrand, the Archdeacon." Was it a sudden inspiration of the Roman democracy, or was it a movement planned by zealous men who wished to compel to the steerage of Peter's bark those strongest hands which shrank, as they well might, from the immense responsibilities of the task? However that may have been, here at least the proverb held good, "Vox Populi, vox Dei." Vainly did the object of their choice rush to the pulpit and endeavour to calm the tumult. His attempts at speech served only to make the thronging people cry out so much the more, "Hildebrand." The members of the Sacred College present hastily consulted together, and with one accord confessed that the popular demand did but anticipate their own decision. Hugh the White, Cardinal Priest, ascended the pulpit and spoke as follows:—"Behold, most dear brethren, yourselves know perfectly that since the time of the holy Pope Leo, this archdeacon as a man prudent and approved has very much exalted the Roman Church, and has delivered this City from immense perils. We can find no one better qualified for the government of the Church and the defence of the City; and we, Bishops

and Cardinals, have elected him for ourselves and you to be the Bishop and Pastor of your souls." And then, as is the custom, putting upon him the scarlet robe, and putting upon his head the Papal mitre, they led him to the Apostolic throne, "unwilling and sad."[1] And they said to the people:—"We choose for our Pastor and our Pontiff a devout man; a man mighty in human and divine knowledge;[2] a distinguished lover of equity and justice; a man firm in adversity and temperate in prosperity; a man according to the saying of the Apostle, of good behaviour, blameless, modest, sober, chaste, given to hospitality, and one that ruleth well his own house; a man from his childhood generously brought up in the bosom of this Mother Church, and for the merit of his life already raised to the archdiaconal dignity. We choose, namely, our archdeacon Hildebrand to be Pope and successor to the Apostle, and to bear henceforward and for ever the name of Gregory."[3] And all the people cried out with loud and continued

[1] "Indutus rubea chlamyde, sicut moris est, et Papali mythra insignitus, invitus et mœrens in Beati Petri cathedra fuit inthronizatus."—Card. Aragon, *apud* Migne, *Patrol. Lat.*, vol. cxlviii. p. 114.

[2] "Geminæ scientiæ prudentia pollentem." Mr. Bowden—of whose excellent translations I avail myself, from time to time, with such alterations as seem fitted to bring out more clearly the sense of the original—somewhat oddly renders these words, "skilled in interpreting the Scriptures." Their meaning, I think, is undoubtedly that which I have given. Dante says, two kinds of light mediate between truth and the mind, reason and grace; and so St. Thomas Aquinas, at the beginning of the *Summa*.

[3] Paul. Bern., c. iii.

acclamation, "St. Peter has chosen our Lord Gregory Pope."

"Unwilling and sad" Gregory may well have been on that eventful day,—the turning-point in the history of the modern world. The Apostolic throne was to be his cross. It may truly be said of him as of his Master, "regnavit a ligno." And full well did he discern—who was better able to discern?—the real character of the work which lay before him. Writing to his friend Desiderius, Abbot of Monte Casino, upon the morrow of his election, he borrows and applies to himself the sacred language under the shadow of which devout souls of every age have sheltered themselves, as "veiling our feelings while it gives expression to them; restraining and purifying while it sanctions them"—"I am come into deep waters, so that the floods run over me;" and again, "Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and darkness hath covered me." Unnerved and overcome, he writes from his bed[1] by the hand of another; and even dictates with difficulty. And to Duke Godfrey, the brother of the late Pope Stephen, he says, a few weeks after, in answer to a congratulatory letter:—"That exaltation which, to you and to others of the faithful, causes affectionate thoughts of us, and joy, awakens in us the bitterness of inward grief, and brings us to the streights of overpowering anxiety. We see what care surrounds us; we feel how heavy is the burden laid upon us; under which, while the consciousness of our

[1] "In lecto jacens valde fatigatus."—*Epis.* lib. i. 1.

infirmity appals us, our soul rather desires the peace of a dissolution in Christ, than a life in the midst of such dangers. The consideration of the task imposed on us so harasses us, that unless, after God, some confidence in the prayers of spiritual men sustained us, our mind must needs sink beneath the greatness of our cares, for so completely, through the agency of sin, does the whole world lie in the wicked one, that all men, and those more especially who bear rule in the Church, strive rather to disturb her than by faithful devotion to defend and adorn her; and, while straining after their own advantage, or the desires of present glory, oppose themselves as enemies to religion and to the justice of God. Most especially must this grieve us, who, amid such difficulties, can neither duly administer the Church's government, upon which we have entered, nor safely desert it. . . . But we may not set aside the law of God through respect of persons, nor swerve from the path of right for the sake of human favour. As the Apostle says, 'If I should wish to please men, I should not be the servant of God.'" [1]

The task which lay before him, indeed, was not one in executing which he was likely to please men. Far from it. The emancipation of the Church from lay domination, and her purification from simony and incontinence, were precisely the things which principalities and powers and the rulers of the world of this darkness least desired. The spirit of the age was

[1] *Ep.* lib. i. 9.

against him; and the spiritualty was deeply infected with the spirit of the age. Feudalism was gradually drawing the hierarchy, throughout Europe, into its system. And the concubinary clergy had to rely upon the secular powers for giving an hereditary character to the benefices they had bought. The Pontiff knew well—his twenty-five years' experience since he came to Rome with St. Leo IX. was enough to teach him—that in the conflict in which he was about to engage, his worst foes would be those of his own household; for in that quarter of a century there had been afforded him the amplest opportunity of understanding the intensity of the opposition offered to ecclesiastical discipline by clerics who hated to be reformed. He had measured his foes. But not a thought of fear, a doubt of the eventual issue, withheld him from the contest. His past career, indeed, offered warrants for his confidence. Seventeen years before, he had been sent by Pope Victor into France as legate *à latere* to reform the concubinary and simoniacal abuses so largely prevalent there, as elsewhere throughout Christendom; and so great was the awe inspired by his presence that forty-five bishops and twenty-seven other dignitaries are related to have come forward to accuse themselves and to resign their benefices. Upon this occasion, as often at other times, he is said to have manifested the singular power he possessed of reading the thoughts of men's hearts.[1]

[1] Among other instances of the exercise of this gift, take the following related by Paulus Bernriedensis. Hildebrand, then

It was by his counsel, too, that his friend, Peter Damiani, had been sent by Nicholas II. to reform the Church of Milan, where, as Baronius relates on contemporary authority, "numbers of priests passed their lives in hunting or hawking; others frequented taverns and brothels; others were known as shameless usurers; almost all lived openly in concubinage or with public women; all practised the most scandalous simony: from the greatest to the lowest none were without reproach." The mission nearly cost Damiani his life, which, indeed, he counted not dear in such a cause; but in the end he succeeded in causing the archbishop and clergy to pledge themselves by oath against simony and incontinence—not, as the event showed, a very stable guarantee. Thus had Gregory, so to speak, served his apprenticeship to the great work to which he proceeded to

Archdeacon, and Hugh, Abbot of Clugny, were travelling together on their return from a synod where sentence of deposition had been passed upon a certain bishop, and had come to a stream. Hildebrand crossed it first, and, pausing on the bank for his companion, addressed to him, on his arrival, the question, "Why have you thought such things of me?" To whom Hugh, in astonishment: "Are you then God, to know the thoughts of men?" "No," replied Hildebrand, "but I heard what you were saying to yourself, in your own mind. You were asking whether it was not rather from pride than from zeal for God that I had deposed that bishop. I looked at you as you were coming through the stream, and this came as by a thread from your mouth to my ears." And so on another occasion, upon Hugh asking him how he could have divined his thoughts, Hildebrand is stated to have replied, "Hac ex animo tuo, quasi per fistulam, ad aures meas deducta est."—William of Malmesbury, *apud* Pertz., *Monumenta Germaniæ Historica*, vol. xii. p. 474.

address himself, with all the energy of his nature, upon his elevation to the Apostolic Chair,[1] remembering, as his threescore years might well serve to remind him, how swiftly the night was coming wherein no man can work. In the Lent of the year following his election, he held a Council at Rome, in which he promulgated the following decrees:—1. That clerics who had obtained any grade or office of sacred order by payment should cease to minister in the Church. 2. That no one who had purchased any church should retain it, and that no one for the future should be permitted to buy or sell ecclesiastical rights (*ecclesiæ jura*). 3. That all who were guilty of incontinence should cease to exercise the sacred ministry. 4. That the people should in nowise receive the ministrations of clerics whom they saw setting at nought these Apostolical ordinances.

Such was the trumpet-blast of no uncertain sound sent by Gregory throughout Christendom. The prophetic instinct of St. Odilo was justified. The reformation was undertaken in stern earnest by one who, like the Baptist, set about his mission in the spirit and power of Elias. There was of course nothing new in the prohibition of simony and incontinence. Pope after Pope, Council after Council,

[1] "Ipse autem qui per multum tempus ad libertatem ecclesiæ obtinendam privatus laboraverat jam ad sacerdotalem dignitatem provectus, a cœpto desistere indignum ducens, tam ob hoc quam pro simonia exstirpanda ac incontinentia clericorum reprimenda plurimum desudabat."—Otto Frising., lib. vi. c. 34, *apud* Migne, *Patrol. Lat.*, vol. cxlviii. p. 214.

had fulminated against these evils. What was in a sense new, was the appeal of Gregory to the faithful at large—his constituting the people the executors of his decrees. It was an appeal to the religious instincts of a Christian people, and those religious instincts responded to it. "It is impressed upon the consciences of all Christians," wrote Lanfranc, the contemporary Archbishop of Canterbury, "that no less than if the acts were those of St. Peter himself, they should tremble when his successors threaten, and reverently rejoice when they show themselves serene."[1] The words of the Pope awoke millions of echoes in human hearts throughout Christendom. Public opinion it was, the public opinion of an age of faith, which sharpened the edge of his spiritual sword, and directed against the guilty the thunder of his anathemas. And in the strenuousness of the resistance which the vigorous action of the Pontiff elicited, we have a sufficient indication of its necessity. In Germany, when the storm broke forth, and Siegfried, Archbishop of Mentz, quailed before it, Gregory sought to strengthen the trembling prelate by a characteristic appeal. "Much should it shame us," he urges in one of his epistles, "while soldiers of this world daily join in battle for a temporal prince, and with scarce a thought of fear hazard their lives, if we, called priests of the Lord, fight not for our King, who abhorred not to undergo the penalty of death for us, and has promised us an eternal reward."[2]

[1] Baron. *Annal.* ad an. 1072.

[2] lib. iii. 4.

In France and Normandy the indignation of the concubinary and simoniacal clergy was no less vehement than in Germany. The Archbishop of Rouen, we read, while endeavouring to enforce the decree of celibacy, was pelted with stones, and fled for his life crying out, "Deus, venerunt gentes in hereditatem tuam," "O God, the heathen have come into thine inheritance." In Spain the papal legate was threatened and outraged at the Council of Burgos. And so it was throughout the rest of Europe. It is not necessary that I should follow in detail the progress of the strife, or dwell upon the irregularities, the profanations, the sufferings, incidental to it. The people are rough justiciars. Even when their instinct is right, their method is usually wrong. The Christian democracy of the eleventh century, roused by the appeal of Gregory, exhibited as little discrimination as was displayed by the people of the Hebrews when, summoned by Elias to choose between the commandments of the Lord and Baalim, they "took the prophets of Baal and brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there." The sufferings of these miserable men and of the partners and offspring of their guilt have long passed away, lost in the vast record of lamentation, and mourning, and woe, which is the history of the human race. But the gain of the victory won over them remains. The "immedicabile vulnus" was cut out of the spiritual body, and the plague was stayed. The celibacy of the clergy, as a recent learned writer, much prejudiced

against it, confesses, was a *necessary element* in sacerdotalism, the abolition of which would have required the entire destruction of the papal system, and the entire reconstruction of ecclesiastical institutions.[1] That this "necessary element" of Catholicism was not destroyed, was, humanly speaking, the work of Gregory VII.

Before I pass away from this part of my subject, I would make four remarks. The first is, that in his prohibition of clerical marriage, as of simony, Gregory was merely carrying out what was clear ecclesiastical law. Apart from all theories, it is certain that the prohibitory rule was of long standing. To go back no further, "direct condemnations of the practice are found in Nicholas's reply to the Bulgarians, 860; in the Synod of Worms, 868; in Leo VII.'s Epistle to the Gauls and Germans, 938; in the decrees of Augsburg, 952; and in Benedict VIII.'s speech, and the decrees passed at Pavia about 1020. Hincmar of Rheims, in 845; Chrodegang, Bishop of Metz, in 950; Councils at Metz in 888, and at Nantes at the end of the same century, had confirmed the rule with additional circumstances of strictness."[2] Secondly, I would note that in turning to the people, Gregory

[1] Lee's *History of Clerical Celibacy*, p. 237. A work containing much valuable matter—and much that is not valuable—but marred by inaccuracy and flippancy, and by the author's habit of pronouncing dogmatically upon questions whether of theology or canon law in which he is obviously unversed.

[2] Cardinal Newman's *Essays Critical and Historical*, vol. ii. p. 289.

was but applying a principle sanctioned by the immemorial tradition of the Roman Pontiffs. It is to the *communis sensus* of the faithful that they, from the first, have appealed in the supreme ecumenical assemblies of the Church. Schaff goes so far as to say that the root of the growing influence of the papacy in the primitive age was in public opinion.[1] "Let no bishop be given to those who are unwilling to receive him," writes Pope St. Celestine I. in the fifth century, adding, "The consent and desire of the clergy and people are necessary."[2] It was to the people that the second and the third Gregory appealed against the Emperor in the great controversy about the veneration of images, and it was by the power of popular influence that they were upheld. And such is ever the true basis of a power which is not a political but a moral power: of a kingdom which is not of this world. It can have no other basis. Thirdly, it may not be amiss to correct a misapprehension as to the effect of the Gregorian prohibition against the ministrations of the concubinary clergy—the more so, as it has of late years received the sanction of the fascinating historian of Latin Christianity. "The

[1] *History of the Christian Church*, vol. i. p. 430.

[2] *Ep.* iv. c. 5. "Necessary," that is, to a valid election as the law of the Church then stood; not necessary to the episcopal character. Pope Celestine would have taught, as clearly as the Council of Trent teaches, that "in ordinatione episcoporum, sacerdotum et ceterorum ordinum, nec populi nec cujusvis sæcularis potestatis et magistratus consensum, sive vocationem, sive auctoritatem ita requiri ut sine ea irrita sit ordinatio."—Sess. xxiii. c. 4.

decree of the synod held in Rome in the eleventh month of Gregory's Pontificate," Dean Milman writes, "absolutely *invalidated* all sacraments performed by simoniacal or married priests,"[1] thus imputing to the Pope the error of the Montanists. The mistake of this brilliant writer is all the more curious as the authority, cited in a note, upon which he founds himself should have preserved him from it. "The synod removed married priests from the exercise of the sacred ministry, and interdicted the laity from hearing their mass,"[2] we there read: a very different thing from "invalidating the sacraments performed by them." Fourthly, I would observe how difficult it is for a Protestant clergyman, however scholarly and accomplished, really to enter into the spirit of an age dominated by religious conceptions so radically opposed, in some important respects, to those of which he is the professed exponent. The distinguished man of letters, whom I have just quoted, may serve, as well as another, to illustrate what I mean. Dean Milman observes in one of his notes, "Damiani must be read to understand his sacred horror at priestly wedlock."[3] Alas! it is quite possible to read Damiani and *not* to understand his sacred horror at priestly wedlock. There is all the difference in the world, as Goethe has somewhere said, between reading out of an author and reading

[1] *Latin Christianity*, vol. iii. p. 118.

[2] "Uxoratos sacerdotes a divino officio removit, et laicis missam eorum *audire* interdixit."

[3] Vol. iii. p. 65.

into him. It is natural, almost inevitable, that an Anglican divine should look at this question of priestly wedlock from the point of view suggested by the habits and associations of the Anglican ministry. It was a saying of the late excellent Principal of the Wells Theological College, Mr. Pinder, that an unmarried minister was but half-equipped for his work. And he was right. The clergyman's wife is a no less admirable worker in the diocese or parish, a no less useful constituent of society in Protestant England, than the clergyman himself. The *ethos* of Catholic sacerdotal life is altogether different, and so is the sentiment with which that life is regarded in Catholic nations. The French decorator in "Barry Lyndon," when complaining of the forcible stop put by the Rev. Dr. Huff—the Abbé Huff, as he calls the Doctor—to his plans for substituting Venuses and Cupids in the place of the antique Gothic monuments of Hackton church, is related by Mr. Thackeray to have exclaimed, "Quel abbé, grand Dieu; il avait douze enfants!" To the Catholic mind twelve pledges of clerical love are as great a stumblingblock as is the language of the eleventh-century reformer about priestly wedlock to the Protestant. But in truth, when St. Peter Damiani, and other ecclesiastical writers of his age, speak of the female member of the sacerdotal household as *scortum*, *pellex*, *meretrix*, *obscœna meretricula*, and the like, their epithets are no mere flowers of vituperative rhetoric, but accurately descriptive. The partner of

the medieval priest was merely an unfortunate female, the lowest and most degraded of her unhappy class. And if the tie which bound her to the criminous clerk with whom she cohabited was nominally that of marriage, it but served to add the guilt of sacrilege to the sin and shame of incontinence; for according to the canon law of the Church, with which public opinion was wholly in harmony, such an union was absolutely void and the mere profanation of a sacrament.[1] Nor can it be pleaded that the effect of these unhallowed connections was to save from graver turpitude the clerics who contracted them. Mr. Lecky truly remarks that "the knowledge that their marriages were illegal was peculiarly fatal to the fidelity of such priests as took wives;" and that "bigamy and extreme mobility of attachments were especially common among them."[2] To say this, indeed, is to say too little. "Bigamy and extreme mobility of attachments" were by no means the worst offences against purity for which the *uxorati sacerdotes* were conspicuous. It was natural that it should be so.

[1] Ratherius, Bishop of Verona (he died in the second half of the tenth century), puts the matter plainly, "Hoc eodem modo quum omnes noverint quia omnis qui præter uxorem legitimam cogit aut fornicationem, aut adulterium facit; presbyter vero vel diaconus uxorem legitimam non possit habere," &c.—*Apud* d'Achéry, vol. i. p. 370. So St. Peter Damiani points out to certain concubines of priests, when urging them to leave the partners of their guilt, that the religious ceremonies and legal documents which accompanied their pretended marriages were idle:—"Totum hoc quod apud alios est conjugii firmamentum, inter vos vanum judicatur et frivolum."—*Opus.* xviii. *Diss.* ii. c. 7.

[2] *History of European Morals,* vol. ii. p. 351.

Cardinal Newman well observed—long before he was a Cardinal or a Catholic—"The practice of taking wives did not at all diminish the licentiousness of the clergy. Rather, it led to it. For since they knew that in marrying they were transgressing their duty, they were easily led on from the recklessness which follows upon the wilful violation of conscience in any matter, from a first sin to a second."[1]

The conflict with the incontinent and simoniacal clergy was not waged without much personal suffering to Gregory himself. Even in his own city of Rome a party was formed against him, consisting of ecclesiastics who had resigned their benefices rather than give up their concubines, of their friends and relatives, and of others who dreaded the Pope's severity, and whose consciences whispered to them that their own turn would come next. At the head of these malcontents was found Guibert, Archbishop of Ravenna, who, in the event, was to figure as an antipope. The Pontiff was worn out, and in the autumn of 1074 he sank into an illness of such gravity that his life was despaired of. His convalescence he describes as "a thing rather to be lamented than rejoiced at." "Our soul," he tells the Countess Beatrice and her daughter Matilda, "was tending towards, and with all desire panting for, that country where He who observes our labour and sorrow,

[1] *Essays Critical and Historical*, vol. ii. p. 289.

prepares for the weary rest and refreshment."[1] And again, writing at the same time to his friend Hugh, Abbott of his beloved monastic home of Clugny:—"Contemplating in mental vision the regions of the West, the South, or the North, I perceive scarcely any bishops lawfully admitted to their office, and leading lives conformable to their sacred character, who rule Christ's people for the love of Christ, and not for the ends of earthly ambition. Nor do I find among the secular princes any who prefer God's honour to their own, or justice to gain. Those nations among whom I dwell—the Romans, the Lombards, and the Normans—I conceive, as I often declare to them, to be in some sense worse than Jews or Pagans. And turning to myself, I find myself so oppressed with the burden of my own works that no hope of salvation remains to me but in the mercy of Christ alone. Did I not trust to attain to a better life, and to do service to Holy Church, I would, on no account, remain in Rome; in which city it has been by compulsion, as God is my witness, that I have dwelt for twenty years past. Whence it comes to pass that, between the grief which is daily renewed in me and the hope which is, alas! too long deferred, I live as it were in death, shaken by a thousand storms. And I await the coming of Him who bound me with His chains, who led me back against my own wish to Rome, and who has here girt me about with countless difficulties;

[1] *Ep.* lib. ii. 9.

and often do I say to Him, Hasten, tarry not; come quickly, delay not: and deliver me for the love of Blessed Mary and St. Peter." [1]

Not the less earnestly, however, did he address himself, until his hour of deliverance should come, to the task which his hand found to do. And he discerned that the time was now ripe when he should enter upon a mightier struggle than any in which he was yet engaged. The root of clerical incontinence and simony, as he knew well, lay in the custom of lay investiture, a practice which in effect drew the prelates of the Church into the meshes of the feudal system, and which had attained its most disastrous development in Germany. This is a subject upon which polemical prejudices have falsified the judgments of writers of every school. Thus, there are Catholic authors who use language which implies that the pretensions of the Emperor [2] Henry IV. were new. On the other hand, Ranke, usually so anxious to be accurate, speaks in terms hardly less likely to mislead. "The constitution of the Empire," he writes, "rested on the connection between temporal and spiritual institutions; the link between them was the investiture; the stripping the Emperor of this ancient privilege was equivalent to a revolution." [3] The truth is,

[1] *Ep.* lib. ii. 49.

[2] Not in strictness Emperor, but Emperor-Elect. He was never crowned; his mock coronation by an anti-pope of course counts for nothing.

[3] *Popes of Rome*, vol. i. p. 18 (Eng. tr.). So Mr. Bryce, in *Holy Roman Empire*: "When Gregory VII. declared that it was

that in the ninth and tenth centuries, as the feudal system developed, the custom had gradually grown up that Bishops and Abbots should receive their investiture from the hands of the feudal lord by the delivery of the Episcopal symbols—the staff and ring—and this without any regard to the nature of their temporalities, which consisted not only of feudal holdings and seignorial rights, but to a very large extent of free or allodial lands, and also without regard to the vital distinction between their episcopal authority and their temporal status.[1] This custom, which it would be a grave error to regard as a mere form—nothing was "a mere form" in the Middle Ages—obviously tended to present the temporal lord as the source of spiritual jurisdiction; and supplemented as it was by the right of designation to vacant sees, claimed by the civil ruler, it led in the vast majority of cases to the absolute disposal of ecclesiastical offices by the sovereign—in entire disregard of the right of election canonically vested in the clergy and people—the mode of disposal very frequently adopted being that of open sale. Lambert of Aschaffenberg, one of the most trustworthy of the authorities upon the affairs of the Empire in the eleventh century, tells us

sin for the ecclesiastic to receive his benefice under conditions from a layman . . . . he aimed a deadly blow at all secular authority" —a statement which really takes away one's breath.

[1] Godfrey of Vendôme distinguishes between two kinds of investiture: "Alia est investitura quæ episcopum perficit, alia vero quæ episcopum pascit. Illa ex divino jure habetur, ista ex jure humano."—*Opus.* vi. Migne, clvii. p. 219.

how the royal palace was turned into a mart for the sale of benefices by Henry IV., the imperial auctioneer himself officiating occasionally, and knocking down bishoprics and abbeys to the highest bidder. And so great had become the scandal thus given, that in 1073, Gregory's immediate predecessor, Alexander II., in a Council held at Rome, had charged the Archbishop of Bamberg present there, with Apostolic letters, requiring the Teutonic monarch to appear before the Pontifical throne to answer for himself regarding it;[1] but the Pope's death, occurring shortly afterwards, the summons had fallen to the ground. Gregory resolved to go to the root of the matter and to eradicate simony by utterly prohibiting lay investiture under pain of excommunication. Upon this matter, Mr. Bowden has a passage which I venture to quote, for I know not who else has so correctly and impartially stated the case:—

"Under Charlemagne and his descendants, prelates became identified with barons, the hierarchical governors of the Church with the feudal dignitaries of the empire; [and] in this blending of dissimilar characters, the sacred and unearthly dignity, which was the object of faith, became merged, to the public eye, in that which was tangible and conspicuous. Under this state of things—the sovereign, naturally conceiving himself entitled to a preponderating voice in the nomination of his representative and vassal—the custom silently became universal, that episcopal elections should be ratified by what was styled regal investiture. Though, in earlier and purer ages of the Church, the binding a bishop by any kind

[1] "Heinricum IV. regem datis Annoni archiepiscopo Bambergensi literis vocat ad satisfaciendum pro symoniaca heresi aliisque nonnullis emendatione dignis quæ de ipso Romæ fuerunt audita."—*Regesta Pont. Roman.*, p. 401.

of formal oath, would have been thought a degradation of the episcopal character, the prelates nominated by Charlemagne or his descendants saw no impropriety, when becoming the beneficed vassals of the throne, in pledging themselves, in the ordinary way, to fidelity and devotion, or in receiving the emblems of their appointment from the regal hand. The symbols adopted for this purpose were the sacerdotal ring and the pastoral staff; symbols which, naturally as they in the first instance suggested themselves, could scarcely fail to escape the indignant criticism of churchmen in a more thoughtful age. For, when their purport was weighed, they could scarcely be regarded as indicative of those civil rights, royalties, and privileges, which, emanating as they did from the fountain of secular honours, bishops might fairly be admitted to hold in subservience to, and as derivative from, the regal authority. They were episcopal, not baronial adornings. They typified, the one the espousals which the bishop, in Christ's stead, contracted with his Church, the other, the pastoral superintendence which, as representing the Great Shepherd, he was authorized to exercise over His flock. And, under the influence of that primitive feeling which sought to trace, in things of a holy nature, the unseen in the seen—to watch for glimpses and shadowy indications of the correspondences which connect the earthly and tangible accidents of the Church with her essential and hidden glories—the more religious contemporaries of Gregory VII. regarded, as though fraught with a mysterious potency of meaning, these honoured instruments and appendages of her ministry. In the rod, they beheld the antitype of that which, in the hand of Moses, had brought water from the rock to the relief of a perishing people. And with regard to the ring, they, with St. Ambrose, beheld in it the seal of a pure faith and the impress of the truth. 'He who hath the ring,' the Saint hath thus spoken, 'hath the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. For God hath sealed us, whose image is Christ, and hath given His Spirit to be a pledge in our hearts; that we may recognize, in the ring which is placed upon the hand, that signet with which the inward parts of our hearts, and the ministry of our outward actions, are sealed.' Impressed with sentiments reverential as these, they could not but shudder to behold the practice of lay investiture, such as it existed around them; to behold the symbols, fraught to their eyes with a significancy so awful, handled and dispensed to Christ's ministers by

a licentious monarch, or, as was the case with many benefices, by his feudatory nobles, as though in exercise of the ordinary privileges and prerogatives of their secular dignity. And when we reflect that a ceremony, in itself so odious to them, was rendered still more obnoxious in their eyes by its connection with the existing prostration of the Church before the temporal sovereignty, as well as by its tendency to perpetuate the system of simony which disgraced the times, we may, in some degree, appreciate the intensity of the feeling with which, when once appealed to on the subject, they were found to insist on its total and perpetual abolition." [1]

Such, unquestionably, were the considerations which led Gregory to promulgate in 1075 the following decree :—" If any one shall, from henceforward, receive a bishopric or abbey from the hand of any lay person, let him not be reckoned among bishops or abbots, nor let the privilege of audience be granted to him as to a bishop or abbot. We, moreover, deny to such a one the favour of St. Peter, and an entrance into the Church, until he shall have resigned the dignity which he has obtained, both by the crime of ambition and of disobedience, which is as idolatry. And in like manner do we decree concerning the lesser dignities of the Church. Also if any emperor, duke, marquis, count, or any secular person, or power whatsoever, shall presume to give investiture of any bishopric or other ecclesiastical dignity, let him know himself to be bound by the force of the same sentence." [2]

[1] Vol. i. p. 327. To economize space, I omit the authorities cited by Mr. Bowden in his notes; but they are well worthy of reference.

[2] Pagi, *Critica in Ann. Baron.* ad an. 1075.

Thus was the gauntlet of the spiritual power thrown down to feudalism: thus was the supreme conflict for the liberty of the Church engaged. The moment was opportunely chosen by Gregory. The Saxons were in full, and apparently successful, revolt against Henry, who thought well to address to the Pope a temporizing letter. But his complete victory over them two months afterwards, at the battle of the Unstrutt, led to an entire change in his demeanour. The simoniacal traffic was carried on by him as openly and unblushingly as before; the decree concerning investiture was ostentatiously set at nought; and the prelates of Saxony were deprived, by his sole authority, of their sees. Upon tidings of these things reaching Gregory, two legates were despatched by the Pontiff with letters to the king, requiring him to appear at Rome to justify himself. They were driven with insult from the Imperial Court at Worms, whither a council of the simoniacal and incontinent prelates of the Empire was hastily summoned with a view of deposing the Pope. By way of facilitating the task of this assembly, a plot had been formed for seizing his person. The leader of it, Cenci, a dissolute Roman baron, had written, promising to bring Gregory into the king's presence,[1] and the measures taken to carry out that assurance afford so singular an insight into the times[2] that it is worth while to pause a little over

[1] "Promittens eundum patrem regis conspectui repræsentandum."—Paul. Bern. c. v.

[2] Most of the details will be found in Paulus Bernriedensis, c. v.

the graphic contemporary narratives of them. On Christmas Eve of the year 1075, a very stormy and tempestuous night, the Pope was singing the midnight Mass at St. Mary Major in the Chapel of the Holy Crib. The rite was well-nigh over. The Pontiff had himself received the Sacrament, and having given communion to the clergy present was communicating the rest of the faithful, when suddenly the place was filled with armed men. It was Cenci and his band, who, sword in hand, rushing to the altar, seized the Pontiff and dragged him away from the unfinished mysteries with blows and wounds. Gregory did not strive nor cry, but with undiminished calm and eyes uplifted to heaven, suffered himself to be stripped of his pallium and chasuble, and to be hurried, still wearing his amice and stole, without the church, where, like a thief, he was placed on a horse behind the back of some ruffian (cujusdam sacrilegi) and hurried off to one of the towers of Cenci. Thence they propose to bear him beyond the walls of the city; but by this time the warning has been given and the fury of the elements has abated. The gates are quickly secured by the people, ample guard being stationed at each, and all night long the city is in confusion with the clangour of trumpets and the ringing of bells, as men hurry to and fro, seeking in vain the place where their pastor is hidden, if peradventure he be still alive. In the morning a great multitude is gathered together at the Capitol. The word goes out that the Holy Father is imprisoned in a certain tower under the custody of

Cenci, the friend of the German king. Siege is at once laid to it. Catapults and battering rams are brought. Fires are lighted before the door. The first rampart yields, and the people reach the foot of the tower itself. Meanwhile the Pontiff remains shut up in a chamber of the fortress. In the confusion which had reigned, a pious Roman citizen and a devout and noble matron had passed in with him; and while the one seeks fur to wrap round the old man, half perished by the cold of that inclement night and fireless prison, and warms in his own bosom the frozen feet of the Apostolic captive, the other essays to wash and dress, as best she may, his wounds; and, like another Magdalene, devoutly kisses his breast and his hair amid her fast-falling tears. Side by side with these pious persons stands the sister of Cenci, not afraid to pour forth curses on the Holy Father; and Cenci himself, who, with sword upraised—stern, minatory, and every way terrible[1]—seeks to exact from the Pontiff an order for the delivery of the Papal treasury and strongholds, Gregory returning to these demands the "non possumus," which, as all the world knows, was the invariable reply of one of his latest successors to more successful brigands. The menaces of Cenci are reinforced by one of his followers (traditoris minister et sequipeda), who, brandishing his weapon, swears with many blasphemies that he will on that very day

[1] "Gladio super illum furialiter stricto, torvus, minax et omnif riam terrificus."—Bertholdus, *apud* Pertz., *Monumenta Germaniæ Historica*, vol. vii. p. 282.

cut off the head of the Pope; when happening to show himself upon the battlements, a javelin, thrown from below, puts an end alike to his threatening and his life.[1] As the morning wears on, Cenci perceives the hopelessness of his situation. The surging crowds around the tower increase. The thuds of the battering ram shake the walls. It is plain that shortly the situation will be changed, that the captor of the Pontiff will speedily find himself the captive of the Pontiff's deliverers. He throws himself at the feet of the most blessed Pope (procidit ad pedes beatissimi Papæ); calls himself parricide; the violator of the sanctuary of the Mother of God, and of the Holy Crib of Jesus Christ; and sues for pity, for penance, for protection from the people raised against him by the most just judgment of God. Gregory, with no touch of anger, turns towards the terror-stricken ruffian grovelling before him on the ground. "The wrong that thou hast done me," he declares, "I pardon as a father (paterne indulgeo); but the sin that thou hast committed against God, and His Mother, and the Apostles, or rather the whole Church, I order thee to redeem by penance." And as the condition of absolution, he appoints a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, so that haply the sinner may find again the grace of God, and from an example of perdition become an example of repentance. Then, appearing at the window of the tower, he shows himself to the people, motioning to them, with his hands, to desist from the attack. But

[1] "Sicque ad tartarum misit," adds Paulus.

his gestures are construed as a sign of encouragement, and the assault being pushed forward with renewed energy, the fortress is speedily taken. The first thought of the rescued Pontiff was to return to the Church of St. Mary Major, to finish the sacred rite from which he had been sacrilegiously torn on the evening of the previous day. Thither was he borne upon the shoulders of the rejoicing people. There, still fasting and upheld by others, he finished at eventide the Mass which he had begun at midnight. Then, having made his thanksgiving, he sought the repose which he so sorely needed, in his palace of the Lateran. Meanwhile Cenci, protected by the Apostolic pardon, escaped, not to make his promised pilgrimage, but to seek refuge in a castle in the Campagna, whence he harried, with frequent forays, the Pontifical territories. In the course of the year he died, suffocated by an ulcer in the jaws, as Arnulphus relates, who in his fate finds an analogy with that of Judas: "quemadmodum Judas, proditor nexu laquei strangulatus."

This was the issue of the attempt to terminate the nascent strife between the Papacy and the Empire by a *coup de main.* Its chief practical effect was to reveal to the Pontiff more clearly the character of the adversaries with whom he had to do. The German king had previously given too ample proof that he

feared not God, neither regarded man. But this deed was evidence of a supreme contempt of that public opinion of Christendom which was the only force whereon the spiritual power had to rely. Thirteen days after it, the Pope addressed to Henry a letter which (as M. Villemain observes), although no mention is made therein of the affair of Cenci, is couched in terms of such calm and commanding gravity, that we cannot fail to trace in it the presentiment of the mortal strife that was at hand. Gregory begins by saying that, considering to what an inexorable judge he must give account of the exercise of the ministry committed to him by the Prince of the Apostles, it is not without doubt that he imparts to the monarch his Apostolic benediction. And then, after comparing the fair words and foul deeds of Henry, he concludes: "Sinner and unworthy as we are, we occupy the chair and Apostolic office of Peter. It is he who receives that which thou sendest us in writing, or causest to be said to us by word of mouth. And while we peruse thy letters, or give ear to the words that are uttered on thy behalf, he sees with unerring eyes the heart, whence have proceeded the things addressed to us."[1] Meanwhile Henry was tired of the mask which he had so long worn, and was prepared to accept the challenge thrown down to him in Gregory's citation. The prelates whom he had gathered together at Worms were quite ready to accomplish his will. No doubt M. Villemain is well

[1] *Ep.* lib. iii. 10.

founded in his opinion that, apart from their desire of flattering the prince, the severe rule of the Pontiff had excited against him the enmity of many, whence the language full of bitter hatred in which the decree of the pretended Council is drawn up. The disregard of imperial authority in Gregory's election, his proceedings concerning the incontinent clergy, and specially his appeal to the people against them, are dwelt upon in many words, and he is accused of treason (*læsa majestas*), divine and human. For these causes, the document ends, the Emperor, bishops, senate, and Christian people declare him deposed, and will no longer leave the flock of Christ to the guardianship of this ravening wolf. Gregory replied by a sentence of excommunication and suspension from the government of the whole realm of the Germans and of Italy[1]

[1] "Totius regni Teutonicorum et Italiæ gubernacula contradico."—Mansi, xx. 467. It was not, in strictness, a sentence of deposition. The incapacity to govern and the dissolution of fealty were, *juxta legem Teutonicorum*, the civil consequences of the excommunication. In England, down to the beginning of the present century, the effect of ecclesiastical censures was very similar. "An excommunicated person in England was placed almost wholly beyond the protection of the law. He could not be a witness or a juryman. He could not bring an action to secure or recover his property. If he died without the removal of his sentence he had no right to Christian burial. Nor was this all. After forty days contumacy he might be arrested by the writ 'De excommunicato capiendo,' issued by the Court of Chancery, and imprisoned till he was reconciled to the Church. It is a singular fact that such a tremendous power, which, in theory at least, might extend even to perpetual imprisonment, should, during the whole of the eighteenth century, have been lodged with an ecclesiastical court, and that it might be applied to men who had committed such trivial offences

—such sentence to become definitive unless the king should repent and give satisfaction within a year. All Christians were released from their oath of fealty to Henry. All were prohibited from yielding him obedience. "I bind him," the sentence concludes, "O Peter, in thy stead, with the bond of anathema. I bind him on the faith of thy power, so that the nations may know and experience that 'Thou art Peter; and upon this Rock the Son of the Living God has built His Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against her.'"

Such was the formal initiation of the great duel between the Papacy and the Empire. To outward view, nothing could seem more disproportionate than the forces massed against one other. On the one side, a young prince, ruling over the greatest of secular sovereignties, and supported by the magnates of his vast dominions. On the other, an aged priest, the son of a carpenter, so powerless in his own city that, as we have seen, his personal liberty was well-nigh at the mercy of any chance band of ruffians. But, in truth, the conflict was merely an acute phase of the great strife carried on, with ever-varying issues, through the ages of the world's history, as in that microcosm, the heart of each individual man, of which human society is but a vastly magnified representation; the strife of which the Apostle speaks in

as the non-payment of fees or costs. Nor was it by any means a dead letter."—Lecky, *Hist. of England in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. iii. p. 495.

words of universal application: "the flesh lusteth against the spirit." The cause of Henry was the cause of man's lower nature—of the beast which is in him, and of the passions of the beast acting on matter, and employing its natural weapon of material force. The cause of Gregory was the cause of that higher law which has its sanctions in the consciences of men. "God is our witness," wrote the Pontiff in an Epistle to the whole Church, "that no personal motive, no secular end, impels us to raise against ourselves bad princes and impious priests, but solely the consideration of our bounden duty and the power of the Apostolic chair, which presses upon us day by day. Better were it for us to suffer the death of the body—a debt which all must pay—at the hand of tyrants, than to consent by our silence, whether from fear or favour, to the destruction of the Christian law."[1] That was the point at issue; whether the claims and rights of the spiritual part of man were to be preserved; whether any principle higher than materialism was to rule among the new nationalities then being formed. And this it is which renders that great conflict so momentous a crisis in the history of the modern world.

It was in the midst of this conflict that the remaining nine years of Gregory's pontificate were passed. They constitute, so to speak, a drama of two acts. The first ends at Canossa. Soon after the promulgation of the Papal sentence, death

[1] "Ad Universos Christianos," *Ep.* lib. iv. 1.

removes Henry's two chief followers. Godfrey, Duke of Lorraine, his most powerful and constant vassal, is smitten by the dagger of an unknown assassin, hired apparently by a feudal neighbour; and leaves his wife, Matilda, entirely unshackled in the administration of her Tuscan domain, and thenceforth able to give the Pontiff that unbounded support and entire devotion which constituted his chief earthly consolation. William, Bishop of Utrecht, the principal of the monarch's ecclesiastical advisers, is suddenly struck down by a mortal disease on Easter Day, in his Cathedral Church, while publicly deriding the Pontifical decree of excommunication and reviling its author;[1] and quickly there spreads far and wide the story of the terrible agony of unavailing remorse in which the sacrilegious prelate passed away; how in his despair he returned for answer to a message from Henry, "Tell him that I and all the fautors of his iniquity are damned to all eternity;" how to those who surrounded his bed of death, he cried out, "Demons are waiting around for my soul; by the just judgment of God I have lost this life and the next." No incident is better fitted than this to bring home to the modern mind the profound unquestioning conviction of the justice of the Pontiff's cause,

[1] "Parum autem de tractatu locutus Evangelico, statim se ad blasphemiam Papæ Gregorii cæco corde menteque vesana prorupuit," &c. This indeed appears to have been the staple of his preaching: "Omnibus pæne diebus solemnibus inter missarum solemnia rabido ore clamabat, perjurum eum, adulterum et pseudo-Apostolum appellans," we are told.—Migne, *Patrol. Lat.*, vol. cxlviii. p. 77.

which reigned in the hearts even of his bitterest enemies. The first fact about the age was its faith —not its superstition, "an infirmity which, taking human nature as it is, is the sure companion of faith, when vivid and earnest"—faith as unquestioning in the bad as in the good: in souls angelical where it worked *per caritatem*, as in souls diabolical which, in full view of "a fearful looking for of judgment," wrought wickedness. Properly to grasp the significance of such a scene as that upon which we have just looked, is to enter a long way into the secret of that vanished time. There can be no question of the deep terror produced throughout the Empire by the fate of the schismatical bishop, whose body lay unburied until permission for its interment, without religious rites, came from Rome. One by one Henry's chief partisans fall away. The prelates whose voices had been raised most loudly in his support at Worms now stand aloof from him, and seek means for reconciliation with the Apostolic See. His feudatories set at nought his behests; his vassals withhold their duty. Finally, in pursuance of an understanding among the principal magnates, the princes and prelates meet in Diet at Tribur, on the 16th of October, 1076, to consider the state of the German kingdom; Henry meanwhile lying at Oppenheim, on the opposite bank of the Rhine, with a scanty retinue. The election of another king is debated in the Diet. Henry humbly sends messengers, promising repentance and amendment. At last, it is agreed that the

whole cause shall be left to the arbitrament of the Roman Pontiff, in a Diet to be held under his presidency at Augsburg, on the coming Feast of the Purification (February 2nd), and that meanwhile Henry shall reside in the city of Spires, dismissing the simoniacal prelates in his train and the rest of his excommunicated followers. No sooner, however, do the magnates leave Tribur, than Henry sends messengers to the Pope, beseeching that he may present himself for judgment in Rome. Gregory refuses the request, and sets out for Germany under the armed escort of the Countess Matilda, when suddenly he learns that the king, almost alone, has crossed the Alps into Italy, resolved, at all hazards, to escape the peril and ignominy of a public trial in the presence of his assembled feudatories. By the advice of Matilda, the Pontiff turns aside from his route, and returns with her to her mountain fastness of Canossa.

There, as Bertholdus relates, Gregory spent his days and nights in prayer imploring the divine guidance at this difficult crisis. It was on the 25th of January, 1077, that the scene took place, which, as is natural, has seized so strongly upon the popular imagination, and has so often supplied a theme for the brush of the painter, the periods of the historian, the verse of the poet. It is not surprising, perhaps, that the plain facts of the case have been somewhat overlaid by the embellishments of these artists. It may be well briefly to recall them. It was not the Pope, then, who

summoned Henry to Canossa, but Henry who sought the Pope there, and that for a very plain and intelligible end of his own. The king was bent upon escaping at any sacrifice from the bond of excommunication and from his engagement to appear before the Pontiff, at the Diet summoned at Augsburg for the Feast of the Purification. The character in which he presented himself before Gregory was that of a penitent, throwing himself in deep contrition upon the Apostolic clemency, and desirous of reconciliation with the Church. The Pope, after so long experience of his duplicity, disbelieved in his sincerity, while, as a mere matter of policy, it was in the highest degree expedient to keep him to his pact with the German princes and prelates. The king pleaded that the sentence of excommunication was weighing on his soul,[1] that the year of grace wherein he might purge himself from it, assigned by the Papal decree, was fast expiring; that he was willing, if absolved, to put himself into the Pontiff's hands and to perform any penance that might be imposed upon him. On three successive days did he appear barefooted in the snowy courtyard of the castle, clad in the white garb of a penitent, suing for relief from ecclesiastical

[1] Lambert, in explanation of Henry's eager desire for absolution, writes: "Rex etiam certo sciens, omnem suam in eo verti salutem si ante anniversariam diem excommunicatione absolveretur, ... quia nisi ante eam diem anathemate absolveretur, decretum noverat communi principum sententia ut . . . . regnum sine ullo deinceps resitutionis remedio amisisset."—*Apud* Pertz., *Monumenta Germaniæ Historica*, vol. vii. pp. 254-6. Paulus Bernriedensis gives a similar account of what he calls Henry's "simulata pœnitentia.'

censure. It was difficult for Gregory to resist the appeal thus made to his fatherly compassion, the more especially as Hugh, Abbot of Clugny, and the Countess Matilda besought him "not to break the bruised reed." Against his better judgment, and in despite of the warnings of secular prudence, the Pope consented on the fourth day to admit to his presence the royal suppliant. Accompanied by his excommunicated followers Henry entered the castle, and falling on the ground before the Pontiff, in the form of a cross, sued for reconciliation to the Church. Gregory wept, moved at the sight of this prodigal returning with the confession, "Father, I have sinned;" touched too, it may be, by that "sense of tears in mortal things" which the spectacle was apt to suggest. The conditions of absolution imposed upon the king were mainly four: that he should present himself upon a day and at a place, to be named by the Pontiff, to receive the judgment of the Apostolic See, upon the charges preferred by the princes and prelates of Germany, and that he should abide the Pontifical sentence—his subjects meanwhile remaining released from their oath of fealty; that he should respect the rights of the Church and carry out the Papal decrees; and that breach of this engagement should entitle the Teutonic magnates to proceed to the election of another king. Such were the terms to which Henry solemnly pledged himself, and on the faith of that pledge the Pontiff, assuming the vestments of religion, proceeded to absolve him with

the appointed rites. Then followed the Mass, which Gregory himself celebrated. At the consummating moment of the sacrifice he turned to Henry, holding in his hand the sacred Host, and enumerating the charges which had been brought against him by the monarch, said: "I might justify myself by proof: I might appeal to the evidence of witnesses who have known me from my childhood, and by whose suffrages I occupy the chair I fill. But I turn from human testimony to that which is divine. Behold the Body of the Lord. Be It this day the witness of my innocence. May Almighty God free me this day, if I be innocent, from suspicion of guilt. May He smite me, if I be guilty, by a sudden death this day." And so, before them all, he broke the Host and received one half of It. Then, turning to Henry, he said, with many solemn words, "If thou be innocent, my son, do likewise." The king in great confusion demanded a moment to confer with his counsellors, and by their advice excused himself from communicating.[1]

So ends the first act in this great tragedy. Gregory's misgivings as to the king's sincerity soon receive too ample justification. "Fear not," the Pontiff is reported to have said,[2] with half con-

[1] I follow the received account, as given by Lambert and other contemporary writers. Dr. Döllinger, in his *Geschichte der Christlichen Kirche*, is of opinion, on grounds which I venture to think insufficient, that Henry did receive communion upon the occasion in question.

[2] "Ne solliciti sitis quoniam culpabiliorem eum reddo vobis."

temptuous sadness to the Saxon envoys who complained of his lenity to the monarch: "Fear not, I send him back to you more guilty than he came." Henry's words to the Pope had been softer than butter; but he had departed with war in his heart; and the cold reception given him by his allies, the Lombard prelates—men steeped in simony, and, well-nigh all of them, living openly with women—had not tended to make his thoughts less bitter. Soon he lays a plot for seizing Gregory at Mantua, whither the Pontiff is invited for the purpose of presiding over a Council. But the vigilance of the Great Countess foils the proposed treachery. Shortly the ill-advised monarch again assumes an attitude of open hostility to the Pope; sets at nought the conditions to which he had solemnly pledged himself at Canossa, and, according to the expression of the historian, Lambert, breaks through the bonds of ecclesiastical law, as though they had been cobwebs. Cobwebs as they seemed to be, he soon discovers that they are of iron. The Teutonic princes, glad to throw off an authority which they loathe and despise—not heeding the advice to pause given by the Roman legates—proceed at the Diet of Forcheim to the election of another king. Their choice falls upon Rudolph of Swabia, who is crowned at Metz on the 26th of March, 1077. The situation is now complicated by the strife between the two rival

Waltram is, I believe, the only considerable authority who vouches for the saying.

sovereigns. Gregory protests that his heart is full of sorrow and heaviness at the sight of the effusion of Christian blood, the trouble of religion, and the threatened ruin of the Roman Empire occasioned by the conflict, and seeks to judge the cause of the pretenders, requiring from each a safe-conduct for his journey to Germany for that purpose. Rudolph gives it, but Henry evades compliance. At last, in Lent, 1080, Gregory, no longer able to tolerate the continual violation by Henry of the pledges given at Canossa, and greatly moved by tidings of his new and manifold sacrileges and cruelties, pronounces again the sentence of excommunication against him, releasing his subjects from their obedience, and recognizing Rudolph as king. Henry thereupon calls together some thirty simoniacal and incontinent prelates at Brixen, and causes them to go through the form of electing an anti-pope in the person of Guibert, Archbishop of Ravenna, an ecclesiastic some time previously excommunicated by Gregory for grave offences. Then the tide turns in Henry's favour. At the battle of the Elster (15th October, 1080), Rudolph is defeated and mortally wounded, and on the same day the army of the Great Countess is overthrown and dispersed at La Volta in the Mantuan territory. Next year, in the early spring, Henry crosses the Alps and advances towards Rome. Gregory's advisers counsel a compromise. But the aged Pontiff is animated by the prescient mind of the antique Roman

"Dissentientis condicionibus
Fœdis et exemplo trahenti
Perniciem veniens in ævum,"

and puts aside the unworthy proposal. A little before Pentecost Henry appears under the walls of the Papal city, expecting that his party within it will throw open the gates to him; but his expectation is disappointed, and being unprovided with the means for laying a regular siege to it, he is compelled, in July, to withdraw from the unwholesome plains of the Campagna. In 1082, the monarch again advances upon Rome and ineffectually assaults it. In the next year he makes a third and more successful attempt, and captures the Leonine city. Again he seeks to win the Pontiff to a *modus vivendi*, and the Romans, worn out with the privations and horrors of so long a state of war, beseech Gregory's compliance with tears. But the Pope's reply was a "non possumus." "I know, by long experience, this king's wiliness and treachery. Nevertheless, if he will make amends to God and His Church for the sins which he has notoriously committed against them, I am ready and willing to absolve him, and to place the Imperial Crown upon his head. But if he will not do this, I ought not, I dare not, to listen to your prayer." In November of this year Gregory holds a Council—the last in which he ever presided—and addresses to the small number of Bishops able to attend it a discourse "breathing rather angelical than human eloquence," speaking to them "of the great doctrines of the faith, of the conversation incumbent upon its pro-

fessors, and of the firmness and constancy required of them under the pressure and troubles of the times, until the whole assembly around him is melted into tears."[1] On the 21st of March, 1084, the Lateran Gate is opened to Henry by the treacherous Romans, and the excommunicated monarch, with the anti-pope by his side, rides in triumph through the streets. The next day, Guibert solemnly takes possession of St. John Lateran, and bestows the Imperial Crown upon Henry in the Vatican Basilica. Meanwhile, Gregory is shut up in the Castle of St. Angelo. Thence, after six weeks, he is delivered by Guiscard, Duke of Calabria, the faithful vassal of the Holy See. But the burning of the city by Guiscard's troops, upon the uprising of the Romans, turns the joy of his rescue into mourning. Eight days afterwards he quits the smoking ruins of his once beautiful Rome, and after pausing for a few days at Monte Casino, reaches Salerno, where his life pilgrimage is to end. A sure presentiment tells him that the time of his departure is at hand, the hour of deliverance for which he had so often sighed under the twelve years' burden of his world-wide charge. And as his malady progresses, and his vital force decays, he passes the days until his change shall come in reviewing his work by the clearer light of approaching death and anticipated eternity. We know what was his testimony of himself at that supreme hour in full vision of the dread meeting, face to face, with the Great

[1] Bowden, vol. ii. p. 310; citing Harduin, t. vi. p. i. p. 1,612.

Taskmaster, to whom, as he had ever remembered, his account must be rendered. Like the Apostle in whose name he had so often spoken, he could aver that he had fought the good fight; that he followed, even to the end, his appointed course; that he had kept the faith. And he had earned an Apostolic reward. "I have loved justice and hated iniquity; therefore, I die in exile." They are the last words he ever spoke. And one of them that stood by made answer, "In exile thou canst not die, Vicar of Christ and His Apostle; thou hast received the heathen for thine inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession." Fitting commendation for the passing of that "strong heroic soul."

It is eight centuries ago that Gregory passed away. But his work has not passed away. No true work ever wholly passes away. "Great things done endure." And that this is so is perhaps the one consideration which renders the faithful study of human history endurable. The story of our race, in every age, might well turn to gloom any mind which contemplates it in its naked reality, were it not for the divine element kept alive in it by those witnesses to unswerving truth and severe holiness and inflexible justice, of whom the world is not worthy, but of whom the world is never left wholly destitute. Of the number of these was St. Gregory VII. The world has been made better by that man's

life and doing, better for us in this nineteenth century. He laboured; and we—the heirs of all the ages—have entered into his labours. Let me briefly set down what it is that we immediately owe him.

The debt of the modern world to Gregory is mainly this: that by his heroic courage and faith unfailing, the triumph of monarchical absolutism throughout Europe was retarded for two centuries—centuries during which the new nationalities, rallied closely round the Apostolic throne, were informed with the conception of a higher law than any resting merely on material power, of a more sacred fealty than any due to secular rulers. His earliest biographer describes him as wrestling against and overcoming "kings, tyrants, dukes, princes, and all the jailers of human souls." And this is an exact description of the battle which he fought and won. For the victory was truly his, although it was not until the Pontificate of Callixtus II., fifty years after his death, that the last and greatest of the issues debated by him—the question of the investiture—was settled, substantially in favour of the Church. His successors were animated by his spirit; they did but unswervingly adhere to his principles; in their lofty words we seem to catch the accents of him, though dead, yet speaking. To him it is primarily and especially due that the institution of bishops, as the basis of episcopal government, ceased to be confounded with investiture. The collect in his office rightly speaks of him as the defender of ecclesiastical liberty. We

owe it to him that the Latin Church did not sink, like the Greek, into the puppet of imperial despotism,[1] and that the human conscience was recognized in the Western world as a domain into which the jurisdiction of temporal princes did not extend. But Gregory was the saviour of political freedom too.[2] He was

[1] "No contest about investiture was possible in the Greek Empire; the Emperor, as later the Sultan also, gave to the new Patriarch, the pastoral staff as sign of the dignity conferred upon him by God through the Emperor's hand. . . . . The arbitrary depositions of Patriarch became more and more frequent; the last vestige of ecclesiastical freedom was lost. . . . . Only too true is what Gregory IX. wrote in 1232 to Germanus II., 'When the Church of the Greeks divided herself from the unity of the Roman chair, she lost at once the privilege of ecclesiastical freedom.'"—Cardinal Hergenrother's *Photius*, vol. iii. p. 841-3.

[2] He occasionally uses language at which the most liberal of his modern critics stand aghast. Thus, in one of his epistles he writes, "Quis nesciat reges et duces ab iis habuisse principium qui Deum ignorantes, superbia, rapinis, perfidia, homicidiis, postremo universis pæne sceleribus, mundi principe, diabolo, videlicet, agitante, super pares, scilicet homines, dominari cæca cupiditate et intolerabili presumptione affectaverunt?"—lib. viii. 21. Upon this passage M. Villemain exclaims, "Est-ce, en effet, un austère et saint pontife, est-ce un démocrate moderne qui prononce ce terrible anathème contre toutes ces dignités de la terre, denoncées comme autant d'inventions diaboliques, dont quelques hommes se sont servis pour marcher sur la tête des autres hommes, que la nature avait créés leurs égaux?"—Vol. ii. p. 75. M. Villemain here, as in so many other places, goes too far. St. Gregory VII. says nothing, either in this passage or anywhere else, in contravention of the Catholic doctrine taught by the Apostle: "Non est enim potestas nisi a Deo; quæ autem sunt, a Deo ordinatæ sunt." As St. Thomas Aquinas, commenting upon this verse of the Epistle to the Romans, points out, "Omnis potestas, a Deo est, *sed potestas ipsa, at non potentes.*" Civil authority, in the abstract, is from God, but not its concrete form, not he who dispenses it. For the rest, the words of Gregory describe with exact accuracy the

the founder of communal liberty in Italy; the apostle of Italian independence. The triumph of the spiritual element over brute force involved the triumph of municipal and national freedom over feudal tyranny. The liberty of the Church, in every age, is in exact proportion to the general liberties enjoyed. And the distinction between the two powers, spiritual and temporal, the two orders, ecclesiastical and civil, is the very foundation on which individual freedom rests, in this modern world of ours—the supreme gain of modern society over the polities of antiquity. It is a distinction which Materialism, the expression of the Paganism innate in human nature, manifesting itself in the public order in the doctrine of the omnipotence of the State, is ever attempting to obliterate. It seemed to have disappeared from the world in what Mr. Matthew Arnold happily calls the "sensuous tumult of the Renaissance," and in the period of absorbing and absolute monarchy which followed. Especially during the eighteenth century, the century of the Christian era in which the Catholic Church reached her deepest degradation—and nowhere was she more degraded than in Catholic countries—but few traces of it are to be found by the most diligent search in Continental Europe, although in England, thanks to the casting out

historical origin of most of the polities existing in his day—or in our own. And the view of this subject taken by St. Augustine (*de Civ. Dei*, lib. xix. c. 15, and *de Doct. Christ.*, lib. i. 23, whence the expression of Gregory, given above, about the natural equality of men is borrowed) and by most of the early Fathers, is identical with his.

of the "new monarchy" in 1688, it gradually established itself under the altered form, which the dissolution of religious unity had compelled it to assume, of freedom of worship and freedom of the press. Yes, that liberty of conscience before human law, which the English-speaking races enjoy in this nineteenth century, is but the expression, in the shape required by this changed time, of the great principle for which Gregory fought. There is not a Glassite, a Sandemanian, a Seventh-Day Baptist, a Recreative Religionist among us, who is not directly indebted to this Catholic Saint for his right to the enjoyment of his uncouth shibboleths; not a newspaper exponent of sensualism or secularism, of the dissidence of dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion, who does not owe to this great Pontiff the right to abound in his own sense—or nonsense. And the forces which in Gregory's time fought against this freedom are fighting against it in our own time. In Germany, a new Protestant Cæsarism has essayed the part of jailer of human souls to its Catholic subjects; while in France, Jacobinism, which is identical in its *ethos* with Cæsarism—the tyrant being legion instead of one, and clad in blouse instead of in imperial purple—is labouring, with all the fanaticism of militant atheism, to overthrow and destroy the rights of the spiritual side of man's nature: "the clergy," one of its leading exponents has declared, "must be taught to render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; and

that all is Cæsar's." Assuredly the clergy will not learn this lesson, whether it be set them by imperial chancellor or communistic wirepuller. For the very *raison d'être* of the sacerdotal order is to bear witness to another principle—a principle asserted in our own century by "the inflexible sweetness" of Pius VII., in his conflict with the greatest and most successful exponent of the doctrine that "no other strength is to be recognized but material force," as in the Middle Ages by the leonine courage of Gregory VII.; the principle for which the loftiest of the poets of the ancient world puts so magnificent an apology into the mouth of the noblest heroine of Greek tragedy—

> *οὐδὲ σθένειν τοσοῦτον ᾠόμην τὰ σὰ*
> *κηρύγματ' ὥστ' ἄγραπτα κἀσφαλῆ θεῶν*
> *νόμιμα δύνασθαι θνητὸν ὄνθ' ὑπερδραμεῖν—*

the principle of the indefeasible supremacy of conscience as the voice of Him whom it is better to obey than man. Efface this principle from the public mind, and you throw back Europe two thousand years to a deeper and more hopeless degradation than that in which the religion of Jesus Christ found us. I am by no means inclined to underestimate the forces which are working for its effacement. But I do not believe that they will succeed. And I do not believe it because I believe that the law of society, like the law of the individual, is a law of progress. And here let me distinguish. As an excellent French writer[1] has admirably said, there are two doctrines of

[1] Ozanam: *La Civilisation au Cinquième Siècle*, pp. 60-88.

progress. There is one, the production of the schools of the sensualistic philosophy, which rehabilitates the passions, and promises to lead the masses to a terrestrial paradise by a road strewn with flowers, while all the while it is conducting them to a hell upon earth through a path defiled with blood and with abominations worse than blood. Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to the goal of the Terror, of Communism, of Nihilism ; and many there be which go in thereat. The people of France are just now thronging it, under the guidance of the obscene blasphemers who, while assuring them that they shall be as gods, are rapidly transforming them into something far lower than brutes. But there is another doctrine of progress, a progress the great law of which is to ascend from the animal to the spiritual, to

> "Move upward, working out the beast,
> And let the ape and tiger die."

And it is under this law—"the law of virtue written in our hearts," Butler calls it—that we are born. It is the law alike for the individual and for society, but both in society and in the individual it is subject to "checks and disasters," to retardment, to retrogression, in its working. The life of humanity, as of each man, is in the fullest sense a state of war—*militia super terram.* It is a perpetual struggle between the flesh and the spirit, the beast and the God that are in us. The will of man is free ; but God has not created humanity without a design ;

and that eternal design, sustained by infinite power, cannot rest without effect. He whose it is to bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades, to loose the bands of Orion, to bring forth Mazzaroth in his season, to guide Arcturus with his sons, who knows the ordinances of heaven, and sets the dominion thereof in the earth, rules also the course of civilization. So that humanity is accomplishing a necessary destiny, and yet is composed of beings really free —free to choose the better or the worse, as they will. Hence the part, the vast part, which error and crime play in human affairs. The race, like the individual, has its days of sickness, its years of wandering out of the way, its periods in which no advance is made, its periods of going back. It seems to me[1] that the fourteenth century with its hundred years' war, the sixteenth century with anarchy in consciences and absolutism on thrones, the eighteenth century with its libertinism of intellect and morals, are so many aberrations of modern society, just as I discern the tokens of its return to the true path in the admirable impulse of 1789, which indeed was swiftly turned aside from its rightful course, but which brought the nations back to the principles of Christian public right. In these periods of disorder the Supreme Disposer of events leaves persons sovereign over their own actions; but He has His hand upon societies. He has appointed them their bounds which they shall not pass, and there He awaits

[1] I am quoting Ozanam, but with full assent.

them to bring them back by painful and dark wanderings nearer to that perfection which, for a moment, they have forgotten. The history of progress is not the history of man only, but of God respecting the liberty of men, and doing invincibly His work by their free hands, almost always without their knowledge and oftentimes in their despite.

Such is the true theory of the progress of society according to Ozanam, whose noble words it is a pleasure to me to echo. It is a theory which must of necessity offend those professors of physics, just now so influential in the world, who do not believe in God; who see in man merely an animal "endowed with a memory of appearances and facts;" who deny the distinction between the senses and the intellect, which to me is the beginning of all philosophy; who, as "the priests of Science," following the precedents of antique Paganism, after due inspection of the entrails of their canine and other victims, immolated to that questionable divinity, smite with solemn *ex cathedra* anathema "the intellectual whoredom of spiritualism;" who conceive of civilization, as the diffusion of material comfort and religious unbelief; who "make of the soul a gas, and of the next world a coffin." With such I do not here contend, for I see not what first principles we have in common which are applicable to the matter in hand. But to those who recognize the Divine existence as a reality, and the first of realities, I submit that this doctrine of progress will the more strongly commend itself the

more closely it is studied; and that of such progress great men are the chief instruments. And to me it seems clear that we owe to Gregory the rescue of liberty of conscience—the first and most precious of all our liberties—in that moment of the history of the modern world when it was in greatest danger of perishing. He preserved it, in his day, by the only means possible in that day, and in the only form possible. He has made the task of those who have subsequently fought and suffered for it, if not less arduous, at least more hopeful. This was the work which he did for the new nationalities, in their most plastic period—a work never, as I believe, to be undone, whether by the pride of kings or the madness of peoples.

"O passi graviora, dabit Deus his quoque finem."

"But Gregory went too far." It would be no great argument against him if this were true. "Omnis Pontifex ex hominibus assumptus circumdatus est infirmitate." Every Pontiff taken from among men is encompassed with infirmity: and this Pontiff was eminently human. The weakness incident to our mortal state dims and falsifies our vision. "Larger, other eyes than ours" are needed to discern the exact bounds which should regulate our action. But, apart from this consideration, it may be noted that the historians and publicists who have judged Gregory most harshly have for the most part forgotten that he must be judged, not by the principles of the nineteenth century, but by the principles of

the eleventh. Take, for example, his assertion of the deposing power, so great a stumbling-block to the modern mind. Now, what is certain about the deposing power is that it was no invention of Gregory's, but part of the public law which he was called upon to administer as the common father and supreme judge of Christendom, and that it was the principal and most efficacious check upon monarchical violence and oppression. His predecessors had spoken of the Divine testimonies before kings as loftily as he. The second Gregory had released Italy from its allegiance to a heretical Emperor. Pope Zachary had deposed Chilperic, or, at the least, had ratified his deposition and the substitution of Pepin as king. But in fact the so-called deposing power was, strictly speaking, only an incident which attended upon excommunication.[1] It was contrary to the spirit, to the universal sentiment, of an age of faith, that a Christian people should serve a monarch who had been cut off from Catholic unity, and who was to them as a heathen man and a publican. In earlier times even the bishops of the several Christian nations took upon themselves to exclude princes from Church membership, and to release their subjects from fealty, as in the remarkable instance where the French prelates assembled at Compiègne laid under ecclesiastical censures Louis le Débonnaire and pronounced him deposed. The same centralizing tendency, which, as Christendom

[1] See the note on p. 168.

was formed round the Apostolic chair, reserved to the Supreme Pontiff the power of canonization, anciently vested in each member of the Episcopate, reserved to him also the right to excommunicate princes. And this right was the safeguard of their subjects. For it must ever be remembered that in the medieval public order the notion of absolute and irresponsible monarchy had no place. The authority of kings rested everywhere upon constitutional pacts, varying in form, but the same in substance. It was limited, fiduciary, and liable to be forfeited for grave infringement of the laws which they had sworn to administer, of the rights which they had sworn to respect, of the duties which they had sworn to perform. And of monarchs so transgressing, according to the public law which had gradually grown up and was in force in Gregory's time, the Pope was the judge. Hence, the Apostolic Chair was the safeguard of right, the help of the helpless, the refuge of the oppressed. It was also, if I may so speak, a permanent court of international arbitration, and so the *nexus* of the public order of Europe. And I do not think that any impartial student of the acts of those who sat therein, from Gregory's time to the time of the Great Schism, will deny that, upon the whole, they rose to the height of their mission. The world has changed all that now. Christendom has disappeared, and with it the conception of a supreme tribunal judging among the nations by a recognized right and a

Divine prerogative. Europe has gone back to that mutually balanced fear (τὸ ἀντίπαλον δέος) which the greatest of ancient historians apparently regarded as the only bond of States. The deposing power has been replaced by "the right of insurrection," supplemented by the regicidal scaffold, the assassin's dagger or bomb. It may be questioned whether the change is wholly for the better.

So much as to the general question of the deposing power. For the rest it cannot be doubted that Gregory was carried by the tide of events further than he had intended to go—that from vindicating the spiritualty against the encroachments of feudalism, he was led to use feudalism as an instrument to bring the Empire into subjection to the Papacy, to make its head "the man" of the Pope. This was natural; nay, inevitable. His work was done in his own day, and primarily for his own day, and by the means which lay ready to his hand; he could find no other. And so, in dealing with other potentates than the Emperor, the tie of fealty by which he sought to bind them to the Holy See was no new device of his. He found it existing; all he did was to strengthen it. And his policy has been amply justified by the event, for it contributed more than anything else to preserve national independence and to foster national development. Upon this subject Cardinal Hergenröther has some extremely sound observations. "It is an unfounded assertion," this very judicious writer remarks, "that Gregory VII. treated

all princes as vassals of the Holy See. It was neither unusual nor uncommon for princes to place themselves and their dominions under the protection of St. Peter. There was a universal subjection of States in matters of religion, but beyond this, in many instances, there was a special subjection founded on various titles, generally the personal desire of the ruling prince. They dedicated themselves to the Prince of the Apostles, or to some other Saint, or to some holy place, and made themselves tributary thereto. This subjection served to show that a prince placed under the protection of Heaven and the Saints *was independent of any earthly power.* Certain it is, that the Popes acted in this matter on no widespread, deep-laid political scheme, inherited by one from the other. Things took shape spontaneously, fashioned by impending dangers, by the spirit of chivalry, or by religious enthusiasm."[1]

"Religious enthusiasm:" it is the key of the enigma. And many a writer of our own times, surveying the great figure of Gregory, and finding here a sufficient account of him and his work, labels him as a fanatic, and dismisses him as unworthy of further consideration from "modern thought." It is, as I

[1] *Catholic Church and Christian State,* vol. i. pp. 401-9 (Eng. Tr.). I am far from denying that there are arguments in Gregory's Epistles—see for example lib. iv. 2, 24; lib. vii. 6; lib. viii. 21—which if carried to their logical consequences would supersede all laws positive or natural, by the Papal authority. And as a matter of fact some of his successors sought so to develope them, unmindful of the counter-arguments by which they should have been modified.

know well, a heavy charge in the age in which we live. As a powerful French novelist puts it, "Nous avons appris à peser le pour et le contre, et nous avons appris que la vérité n'est qu'une nuance. Après cela le moyen de se fanatiser!" But Gregory lived eight hundred years before this sublime discovery. There were no *nuances* in his mind. On the one side was justice, which he loved; on the other iniquity, which he hated. For him it was the whiteness of snow or the redness of scarlet. If this is fanaticism, he was a fanatic. But his fanaticism was informed by the widest and most comprehensive discernment of the needs of his age; a discernment that made of him a great educational reformer, a great liturgical reformer, and one of the founders of that vast system of canon law which, amid the chaotic mass of feudal customs, some barbarous, some ridiculous, all narrow, preserved the broad scientific principles and rules of the Roman jurisconsults, and rendered them available for the needs of medieval society. It was a fanaticism, too, consistent with the truest liberality to those without the Christian pale, "who believe and confess, though in a different way, one God, and daily praise and adore Him, as the Creator of all ages, and the Governor of the world," the true Light "that enlighteneth every man that cometh therein," "without whom we cannot do or think anything that is good."[1]

[1] I am quoting from his striking letter—the last in the Third Book of his Epistles—to Anzir [Anazir], the Saracen Prince of Mauritania Sitiphensis.

Gregory was a fanatic, as St. Ambrose, St. Anselm, Savonarola were fanatics; as Moses, Gotama, Mohammed were fanatics; nay, as He, the fount of grace and truth, was a fanatic, of whom the judgment of the cool and cautious intellects of His day was, "He hath a devil, and is mad." The reproach of Gregory is the reproach of Christ, and herein is the secret of his success. The cool and cautious intellects pass away, and the "little dust of praise" stirred by admiring contemporaries soon falls, and for the most part serves but to hide their tombs; "their memorial is perished with them." Great enthusiasms are the strongest and most enduring things in the world. "La solidité d'une construction est en proportion de la somme de vérité, de sacrifices, de dévouement qu'on a déposé dans ses bases. Les fanatiques seuls fondent quelque chose."[1]

[1] Renan: *Conférences d'Angleterre*, p. 94.

CHAPTER III.

MEDIEVAL SPIRITUALISM.

Not the least important chapter in European history is written in the hymns of the Christian Church. The ages of the era by which we reckon are filled with the notes of praise from the first until now; from the angelic "Gloria in excelsis Deo," the hymn "to Christ as God," of which Pliny testifies, in primitive worship, down to the heart-stirring strains with which the Wesleys woke England in the last century into new spiritual life, and the verse with which Mr. Keble ushered in the great religious revival of our own day. Nor can we doubt that so it will be in the generations that shall come after, however altered the condition of society or the position of ecclesiastical organizations. "Creeds pass, rites change," but religious emotion endures; and the instincts of prayer and praise, so deeply rooted in man's nature, will ever find vent in metrical compositions; compositions which are their own "exceeding great reward" to their authors, as well as their gifts to the spiritual treasure-house of the human race.

Every religion has its hymns, and in those hymns

are to be found the truest indications of its real and essential character. Thus if we go back to the childhood of our race, the Vedic songs of our Aryan ancestors speak to us chiefly of their deep awestricken consciousness of a mysterious Presence alike manifested and veiled by external nature, while the Hebrew psalms are instinct with that personal apprehension of a living and true God, the creator and final end of the worshipper, which is in truth the great underlying idea of Judaism. Again, if we survey what is perhaps the latest creed offered to a world which labours under an invincible need of believing, if we consider attentively that humanistic gospel which proclaims "the dignity of man as a rational being apart from theological determinations," it is in rhythmic utterances, such as those wherewith Mr. Swinburne invokes "our Lady of Pain" to "come down and redeem us from virtue," that we shall find the true key to its mysteries and the right interpretation of its aspirations. My present concern is not, however, with devotional poetry in general, nor even with the religious verse of Christianity as a whole, but with one important branch of it, too little known and appreciated, the medieval hymns of Catholicism: "that wonderful body of hymns," Dean Church has justly termed them, "to which age after age has contributed its offerings, from the Ambrosian hymns to the *Veni Sancte Spiritus* of a King of France, the *Pange Lingua* of Thomas Aquinas, the *Dies Iræ*, and the *Stabat Mater* of the two Franciscan brethren

Thomas of Celano and Jacopone." In speaking of these hymns as medieval, I use the word in a large sense, for in strictness the medieval period must be held to commence with the re-creation of the Roman Empire by Pope Leo III., when, to use the words of his diploma, he "consecrated as Augustus"[1] the great Frankish Monarch on Christmas Day in the year 800. But the definite beginnings of the middle ages, the visible germination and unfolding of the distinctive feelings, beliefs, practices, modes of life embodied in the new order, may certainly be clearly traced from the days of St. Ambrose and St. Augustine, of Prudentius and Pope St. Damasus. The sacred poetry with which I am concerned is a peculiar feature and product of that order, growing gradually as it grew, developing as it developed, culminating when it culminated, declining when it declined; and supplies an important means for judging of it from an important point of view, we might, indeed, say the most important. Religion is "the substance of humanity" creatively determining the character of the art, the literature, and political institutions of a people. These hymns, then, as the natural outcome and true expression of the religion of the generations in which they were composed, are of special value as documents of history, and it is with the purpose of thus regarding them that I ask my readers to make a brief excursion with me into this department of European literature,

[1] "Quem, auctore Deo, in defensionem et provectum universæ S. Ecclesiæ Augustum hodie sacravimus."

and to consider what we may learn there regarding medieval spiritualism.

And first it will be well briefly to glance at the principal sources which are open to us for the study of the sacred poetry of the middle ages. Foremost among them are the great works of Daniel and Mone, and of these the *Thesaurus Hymnologicus* of the first-named writer is the most complete, and may be considered to be worth all the older collections[1] put together. Next in order may be reckoned Dr. Neale's *Dissertation on Ecclesiastical Latin Poetry*, which forms part of the volume on Roman literature in the *Encyclopædia Metropolitana:* his *Sequentiæ Medii Ævi*, and the supplementary series of *Sequentiæ Ineditæ*, published by him in the *Ecclesiologist.* Then comes the edition of Adam of St. Victor, given to the world by Mr. Wrangham, with very close translations, regarding which it must here suffice to say that reproducing, as they do, the metres and rhymes of the original, they have attained a signal measure of success in an extremely arduous undertaking. Archbishop Trench's volume of *Sacred Latin Poetry*, although defective and therefore misleading if taken as a specimen of medieval religious thought—a character which the compiler is far from attributing to it, and indeed expressly disclaims for it—yet comprises many hymns of the highest merit. Its peculiar value, how-

[1] The three principal of these older collections are those of ~~Toneritinus~~ Trevirensis, Adelphus, and Clichtovœus,—all compiled in the sixteenth century.

ever, lies in its introduction and notes. Nowhere has Dr. Trench more conspicuously displayed the extent of his reading, the delicacy and grace of his literary touch, the acuteness of his critical faculty, than in "this most learned and elegant work" as Dr. Neale justly terms it, which may truly be proposed as a model of judicious editing, "commentationis velut normam subsequentibus editoribus."[1] Well worthy of notice is Dr. Neale's own volume of translations, where we have the true text of his versions, many of which have suffered grievously from the makers of hymn-books. Just a century ago John Wesley complained—"Many gentlemen have done my brother and me, though without naming us, the honour to reprint many of our hymns. Now they are perfectly welcome to do so, provided they print them just as they are. But I desire they would not attempt to mend them, for they really are not able. None of them is able to mend either the sense or the verse."[2] Dr. Neale, in the preface to his third edition, using a less high tone, acknowledges that, in some cases, the alterations of his reproducers have been improvements, but thinks that as a rule his would-be correctors have been misled by imperfect acquaintance with the force of words in the Latin originals. Regarding these versions of Dr. Neale's, it may truly be said that in many respects he acquitted himself well in a task

[1] *Sequentiæ ex Missalibus*, præfatio, p. x.

[2] Preface to *A Collection of Hymns for the use of the people called Methodists*, dated Oct. 20th, 1779.

of consummate difficulty. All translation must be regarded as a problem which can never be fully solved. Literalness is fatal to style, and an attempt at equivalence inevitably opens a door to new ideas. Every language has its own *indoles*, and it is not too much to say that, as a general rule, its literature is untranslatable in proportion as it is worth translating. This is true even of prose. It is *a fortiori* true of poetry. Shelley, in a note to his rendering of a grand chorus in *Faust*, observes: "It is impossible to represent in another language the melody of the versification. Even the volatile strength and delicacy of the ideas escape in the crucible of translation, and the reader is surprised to find a *caput mortuum*." In some respects the works of the medieval hymnists present even greater difficulties to the translator than the masterpieces of modern poetry, for the mould in which they are cast is of another age. Daniel's remark, in speaking of the numerous versions attempted of the sublimest of them—Thomas of Celano's *Dies Iræ*—holds good, in varying measure, of all: "Cantus non tantum verbis sed ingenio etiam et majestate est latinissimus, et ab alia quavis lingua alienus. Recte igitur in illas interpretationes cadit illud poetæ 'In magnis voluisse sat est.'" [1] Dr. Neale must certainly be credited with abundant good-will, and his knowledge of his subject was little inferior to his devotion to it. His poetic faculty was genuine, if not of a very high order; and how unsparing his toil must

[1] *Thesaurus*, vol. ii. p. 121.

have been will be best understood by any one who shall undertake a similar task—a task rendered more arduous by the rule to which he usually and wisely adhered of adopting the exact measure and rhyme of the original. But against his many excellences must be set off one great blemish. It must be owned that here, as elsewhere in his writings, there is a vein of disingenuousness, not to use a harsher expression, which detracts gravely from the value of his work. There is much throughout every department of the religious literature of the middle ages which is irreconcilable with any sane interpretation of the standards of Anglicanism. In dealing with this literature several courses are legitimately open to a professed adherent of the Established Church. He may, like Archbishop Trench, select from it portions congruous with his own religious profession, frankly owning that there are other portions which he has put aside. Or he may deal with it as Dean Milman has done, as Daniel, himself a Protestant, has done, not from a theological, but from a literary and historical standpoint. But what he is not at liberty to do is to ignore or to gloss over the fact that medieval Christianity, centring, as it did, round "the Sacrifices of Masses," and instinct, as it was, with "the Romish doctrine concerning Purgatory, Pardons, Worshipping and Adoration, as well of Images as of Reliques, and also Invocation of Saints," is a different religion from the system established by the Reformers, which pronounces those sacrifices to be "blasphemous fables

and dangerous deceits," and repudiates that doctrine as "a fond thing, vainly invented." This capital fact no honest Anglican is at liberty to ignore or gloss over; and that is just what Dr. Neale throughout his life was endeavouring to do. His main aim was to present to his readers, not a true picture of the medieval Church, but a view of it so retrenched, adapted, coloured, as to bear some resemblance to the eclectic or original religion evolved of late years by the personal tastes and private judgments of a few English clergymen, assisted by architects, musicians, and ecclesiastical tailors. A radical vice of unreality infects almost all his performances. If carefully examined they will be found to be to a large extent "pictæ tectoria linguæ." They do not ring true. I am far from formally imputing to Dr. Neale deliberate and conscious dishonesty. But his sympathies got the better of his reason. Hence he dwelt among shadows, the ghosts of the past and the day-dreams of the present, asserting the thing that is not, and ignoring the thing that is. In what I am about to write I shall avail myself gratefully of his labours in a field where his learning, his zeal, his patience, produced a plentiful harvest. But it is right that I should here point out once for all the abundant tares which will be found among his wheat.

These, then, are the chief sources to which I shall resort in giving some account of this great field of

medieval literature, and in culling from it a few specimens such as shall seem most fit "ad illustrandam totam illius ævi indolem.' And first it is necessary to point out emphatically that it is a distinct field, possessing, among other characteristics, a language of its own. For long years, indeed for centuries, the tongue in which are enshrined some of the noblest results of philosophical speculation and of the human fancy, lay under proscription as barbarous; dog-Latin, monkish Latin, low Latin, being common terms of opprobrium used for designating it. But medieval Latin is no uncouth patois; it is a real language, with definite rules, principles, and powers. To us, indeed, it is dead: but to the men of the middle ages it was in the fullest sense living;[1] and it can no more be judged of by the standards of the Augustan age than Westminster Abbey by the rules of Vitruvius. Nowhere perhaps has the vast influence wielded by Christianity in the world been more significantly illustrated than in its effects upon human speech. It has created the languages and literature of modern Europe: but it previously called into existence that new Latin out of which one large group of those

[1] It was the common tongue throughout Europe of the learned, the language in which they wrote, spoke, and thought. But in Italy it was something more down to a late period. As Ozanam remarks: "Au onzième siècle, au douzième, jusqu'au treizième, la langue latine n'avait pas cessé d'être comprise en Italie, non des lettrés seulement, mais de tous. C'était en latin qu'on prêchait le peuple, en latin qu'on le haranguait, en latin qu'on lui composait des chants de guerre."—*Les Poëtes Franciscains*, p. 33.

languages has come, and from which all of them have derived much. As the Western Church formed Christendom, so she formed anew the tongue which for long ages was to be the *lingua franca* of her spiritual empire. And in this process of reformation she came upon the poetical forms of the classical literature of Pagan Rome: forms not indeed indigenous to Italy, but adaptations of Hellenic metres, which, naturalized by the genius of Ennius and Lucretius, of Catullus and Horace, had supplanted the old Italian or Saturnian versification, based upon rhythm. She came upon these forms, and tried them and found them wanting. More than one of her poets indeed used them, and not without skill: but it may be truly said of them, that they perished in the using. Thus Prudentius, the greatest who attempted them—the dimeter iambic is the favourite metre of his hymns, but asclepiads and trimeters are not unfrequent—assumes a large licence in altering the value of syllables. His latest editor, Dressel, well observes: "Fides novella, novellum loquendi modum sibi adtulit, quo factum est ut veterum linguam pro re nata immutatam videamus."[1] And Dressel goes on to observe how he disregards the quantities both of proper names and of words, and how "in arsi sæpius prævalet accentus, lege quantitatis posthabita." It is much to

[1] "Aurelii Prudentii Clementis quæ exstant carmina ad Vaticc. aliorumque codicum et optimarum editionum fidem recensuit, ectionum varietate illustravit, notis explicavit Albertus Dressel." Lipsiæ, 1860. Prolegomena, p. xvii.

be regretted that this great poet, "the Horace and Virgil of the Christians," Bentley does not hesitate to call him, is little more than a name to us. Some authentic biography of him would supply a valuable illustration of the times in which he lived. But none such exists. All we know of him is derived from forty-five beautiful and pathetic verses which are prefixed by way of Preface to his works. It seems that he was a Spaniard, born in the year 348; that he received a liberal education, and after practising for some years as a pleader, twice filled high judicial office:

> "Bis legum moderamine
> Frenos nobilium reximus urbium
> Jus civile bonis reddidimus, terruimus reos;"

words which Dressel (as I think, rightly) explains, not of the Consulate, but "de munere provinciæ rectoris seu præsidis." Subsequently he received from the Emperor promotion, the nature of which has much exercised his commentators, as may be seen from a long and learned note in Dressel's *Prolegomena*. Archbishop Trench describes it as "a high military appointment at Court," an interpretation which at all events completely fits the poet's own words. At the age of fifty-six he appears to have become imbued with a profound sense of the nothingness of the things among which and for which he had lived:

> "Numquid talia proderunt
> Carnis post obitum vel bona vel mala,
> Cum jam, quidquid id est, quod fueram, mors aboleverit?"

From that time forth he devoted himself to sacred poetry. The works in which he discusses theological subjects in vigorous hexameters, are little read now. Although they contain many noble passages, the questions with which they deal, burning enough in his time, have for the most part burnt out. It is upon his *Liber Cathemerinon*—Christian Day, as we may call it—and his *Liber Peristephanon*, or Martyr's Garlands, that his fame chiefly rests. I will quote a few stanzas from his Burial Hymn (*Ad Exequias Defuncti*), the finest perhaps which he ever wrote, although there are others hardly less noble. I essay an English version, for which I fear the only merit that can be claimed is that it is an almost literal rendering of the original:

"Jam mœsta quiesce querela,
Lacrimas suspendite matres;
Nullus sua pignora plangat:
Mors hæc reparatio vitæ est.

Nunc suscipe terra fovendum
Gremioque hunc concipe molli;
Hominis tibi membra sequestro,
Generosa et fragmina credo.

Tu depositum tege corpus,
Non immemor ille requiret
Sua munera fictor et auctor
Propriique ænigmata vultus.

Nos tecta fovebimus ossa,
Violis et fronde frequenti,
Titulumque et frigida saxa
Liquido spargemus odore."

Now hushed be all sorrow and sighing,
Restrain your fast tears, O ye mothers;
Let no one bemoan his lost loved ones,
This death is but life's reparation.

Now receive him and lovingly tend him,
O earth: in thy soft bosom fold him.
To thee a man's frame I surrender;
The relics I give thee are noble.

Hide well this deposited body,
For He, not unmindful, will seek it
Whose it is: whose hands fashioned and made it,
And created it in His own likeness.

We will honour the bones thou enshroudest,
With violets and many a green leaf,
The cold stones and the legend graved on them,
With odorous unguents bedewing.

It must be owned that Prudentius is often of a more than Wordsworthian prolixity, but in the midst

of much misplaced rhetorical ornament, due to the degenerate taste of the age, which we could well wish away, there is constant evidence of a high poetic faculty. And his verses are of great value as affording an insight into the religious conceptions and practices of the age. One of their chief notes is a stern, heroic, almost fierce asceticism. Fasting he treats as a prime means of Christian life. And he carries his severity so far as to anticipate the repudiation of animal food, which has become part of the rule of certain religious orders:

"Absit enim procul illa fames,
Cædibus ut pecudum libeat
Sanguineas lacerare dapes.

Sint fera gentibus indomitis
Prandia de nece quadrupedum,
Nos oleris coma, nos siliqua
Feta legumine multimodo
Paverit innocuis epulis."

And in his hymn in honour of St. Eulalia he records his admiration of the severe manners of that martyr when a little child:

"Jam dederat prius indicium,
Tendere se Patris ad solium,
Nec sua membra dicata toro:
Ipsa crepundia repulerat
Ludere nescia pusiola.

Spernere sucina, flere rosas,
Fulva monilia respuere,
Ore severa, modesta gradu,
Moribus et nimium teneris
Canitiem meditata senum."

The vast change which for four centuries had been coming over the European mind is faithfully reflected in Latin literature. How far off are the Lydia and

Acme of Catullus, the Chloe and Lyce of Horace, from the Virgin Saint of the Christian poet.

Contemporary with Prudentius was St. Ambrose, whose hymns were such a living power with his great convert St. Augustine.[1] Most of those which commonly bear his name certainly are not his. Cardinal Thomassin, a high authority, would refer to him some twenty compositions now extant. But Dr. Neale is probably right in reducing the number to ten. I shall give the text of one about which there can be no doubt—"his immortal hymn," Archbishop Trench calls it, "Veni Redemptor gentium." The translation, which I place side by side with it, is Dr. Neale's:

"Veni Redemptor gentium,
Ostende partum Virginis:
Miretur omne sæculum,
Talis decet partus Deum.

Non ex virili semine,
Sed mystico spiramine,
Verbum Dei facta est caro,
Fructusque ventris floruit.

Alvus tumescit Virginis;
Claustrum pudoris permanet;
Vexilla virtutum micant:
Versatur in Templo Deus.

Procedit e thalamo suo,
Pudoris aula regia,
Geminæ gigas substantiæ
Alacris ut currat viam.

Egressus ejus a Patre,
Regressus ejus ad Patrem:
Excursus usque ad inferos,
Recursus ad sedem Dei.

"Come, Thou Redeemer of the earth,
Come, testify Thy Virgin Birth:
All lands admire,—all time applaud,
Such is the birth that fits a God.

Begotten of no human will,
But of the Spirit, mystic still,
The Word of God, in flesh arrayed
The promised fruit to man displayed.

The Virgin's womb that burden gained,
With Virgin honour all unstained:
The banners there of virtues glow:
God in His Temple dwells below.

Proceeding from His Chamber free,
The Royal Hall of chastity,
Giant of two-fold substance, straight
His destined way He runs elate.

From God the Father he proceeds,
To God the Father back He speeds:
Proceeds—as far as very hell:
Speeds back—to Light ineffable.

[1] See, among other instances, that afforded by a passage in the *Confessions*, lib. ix. c. xii.: "Ut eram in lecto recordatus sum veridicos versus Ambrosii tui," &c.

Æqualis eterno Patri	O equal to the Father, Thou!
Carnis stropheo cingere,	Gird on Thy fleshly mantle now!
Infirma nostri corporis	The weakness of our mortal state,
Virtute firmans perpeti.	With deathless might invigorate.
Præsepe jam fulget tuum,	Thy cradle here shall glitter bright,
Lumenque nox spirat novum,	And darkness breathe a newer light,
Quod nulla nox interpolet,	Where endless faith shall shine serene,
Fideque jugi luceat."	And twilight never intervene."

One very important feature in the verses of St. Ambrose is the frequency of rhymes. He was not indeed the first of Latin poets to use them. They are distinctly to be traced in the hymns of St. Hilary, who died Bishop of Poitiers in 368, and we find them in germ long ages before.[1] But it was not until the end of the fourth century that the two features which were to become distinctive of the new lyrical Latin poetry are clearly marked—on the one hand neglect of metre, and on the other employment of rhyme, not, at first, doubtless, "as an accurately defined beauty, but as an almost unconscious development of the new system," as an "arbitrary ornament rather than as an essential element of the rhythm."[2] From this time forth these two features become of ever-increasing importance. Here, as in so many provinces, the old order is changing, giving place to the new. The strictness of metrical observances becomes more and more relaxed, and accent, marked and defined by rhyme, takes their place. Thus, as Ampère well ex-

[1] "Verses with middle and with final rhymes occur," Archbishop Trench points out, "in every one of the Latin poets." "As we reach the silver age they become more frequent. They abound in Lucan."—*Sacred Latin Poetry*, p. 39.

[2] *Ibid.*

presses it, what had at first been a mere "fantasy of the ear," grows in the event to "an imperious need," and is "transformed into a law." "At first the rhymes were often merely vowel or assonant ones, the consonants not being required to agree; or the rhyme was adhered to, when this was convenient, but disregarded when the needful word was not readily at hand; or the stress of the rhyme was suffered to fall on an unaccented syllable, thus scarcely striking the ear; or it was limited to the similar termination of a single letter; while sometimes on the strength of this like ending, as sufficiently sustaining the melody, the whole other construction of the verse and arrangement of the syllables was neglected."[1] And so we may trace the progress of that which was to become the basis of modern prosody, "step by step, from its rude, timid, and uncertain beginnings, till in the later hymnologists of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, an Aquinas or an Adam of St. Victor, it displayed all its latent capabilities and attained its final glory and perfection, satiating the ear with a richness of melody scarcely anywhere to be surpassed." Without pausing to follow this progress in detail, let us hasten on to the epoch of which Archbishop Trench speaks with such enthusiasm. It is with Venantius Fortunatus that the great volume of medieval Latin poetry, we might indeed say of modern lyrical poetry, may be held to open. Born in 530, he appears, like Prudentius, to have been wholly absorbed during his

[1] *Sacred Latin Poetry*, p. 37.

youth and early manhood in worldly pursuits. They were, however, pursuits of a less grave kind than those which occupied the Spanish poet. "A master of *vers de société*, he wandered, a highly favoured guest, from castle to cloister in Gaul, repaying the hospitalities which he everywhere received, with neatly-turned compliments in verse." All at once he broke off from this way of life, and entered a monastery at Poitiers, where he remained until his death in 609. His *Vexilla Regis* marks an epoch. This world-famous hymn was composed on occasion of the reception of certain relics by St. Gregory of Tours and St. Radegund previously to the consecration of a church at Poitiers, and was afterwards adopted in the Passiontide services of the Latin Church, where it holds its place to this day. For the English version of it I am indebted to the accomplished pen of the Rev. Digby S. Wrangham :

"Vexilla regis prodeunt,
Fulget crucis mysterium,
Quo carne carnis Conditor
Suspensus est patibulo.

Quo vulneratus insuper,
Mucrone diro lanceæ,
Ut nos lavaret crimine,
Manavit unda et sanguine.

Impleta sunt quæ concinit,
David fideli carmine,
Dicens : in nationibus,
Regnavit a ligno Deus.[1]

"The Banners of the King go forth ;
Bright gleams the mystic Cross o'er earth,
Where He in flesh, who flesh did frame,
Was hung upon the tree of shame :

Where, wounded by the pointed head
Of cruel javelin, he shed
His blood, with water mixed therein,
That He might cleanse us from our sin

Fulfilled is that which David sang
In verse, that from true prescience sprang ;
Proclaiming "from His Cross of wood,
King o'er all lands, hath reigned our God."

[1] The Italic version reads in Psalm xcv. 10 :—"Dicite in nationibus quod Dominus regnavit a ligno."

Arbor decora et fulgida, Ornata regis purpura, Electa digno stipite, Tam santa membra tangere.	O tree most beautiful, most bright, With regal purple richly dight! Elect to touch with honoured stem The limbs of such a sacred frame!
Beata cujus brachiis Pretium pependit corporis, Statera facta sæculi, Prædamque tulit tartaris."	Blest tree, upon whose arms outflung The ransom of the whole world hung; The balance where His body lay, Who bore the spoils of hell away."

As Dr. Neale points out, the rhymes here are for the greater part only assonant; but the principle was firmly established. A still greater step, however, was made by Venantius Fortunatus in his mastery over the trochaic tetrameter, "a measure which with various modifications was to become the glory of medieval poetry." There are one or two examples of this metre in Prudentius, but Fortunatus was the first to group it into stanzas. By way of specimen of it I give a few verses from his famous hymn *Pange Lingua*, as to which Daniel says, "in pulcherrimorum numero recensendum esse, id nemo infitias ibit nisi qui quæ sit vis et natura sacræ poeseos prorsus ignoraverit."[1] The very beautiful English version is by Dr. Neale.

"Crux fidelis inter omnes, arbor una nobilis, Nulla talem silva profert fronde, flore, germine; Dulce lignum, dulci clavo dulce pondus sustinens.	"Faithful Cross! above all other, one and only noble Tree! None in foliage, none in blossom, none in fruit thy peers may be; Sweetest wood and sweetest iron, sweetest weight is hung on thee!
Flecte ramos arbor alta, tensa laxa viscera, Et rigor lentescat ille quem dedit nativitas, Ut superni membra regis miti tendas stipite.	Bend thy boughs, O Tree of Glory! thy relaxing sinews bend: For awhile the ancient rigour, that thy birth bestowed suspend; And the King of heavenly beauty on thy bosom gently tend.

[1] *Thesaurus*, vol. i. p. 165.

Sola digna tu fuisti ferre pretium sæculi,
Atque portum præparare nauta mundo naufrago
Quem sacer cruor perunxit fusus agni corpore."

Thou alone wast counted worthy this world's ransom to uphold;
For a shipwreck'd race preparing harbour, like the Ark of old:
With the sacred blood anointed from the smitten Lamb that roll'd."

Venantius Fortunatus, then, definitely opened the new school, and it formed rapidly. From his time Latin lyrical poetry lays aside entirely what Ampère calls the shreds of classical metres, and rhyme is recognized as an essential element of a hymn. A great crowd of poets from the opening seventh century developed and elaborated the system which the hymnologists of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were to complete. Among them were Venerable Bede, Godescalcus, St. Odo of Cluny, and Notker, the inventor of the Sequence, and the authors of the hymns *Apparebit repentina*, *Veni Creator Spiritus* (attributed to Charlemagne), *Gloria laus et honor*, *Urbs beata Jerusalem*, *Deus tuorum militum*. But the golden age of this department of literature is the period opening with St. Peter Damiani and King Robert II. of France, and closing with St. Thomas Aquinas and Thomas of Celano. It was in this period, extending, roughly speaking, from the year 1000 to the year 1300, that there flourished those supreme masters of sacred song to whom we owe what may be called without hyperbole—"the highest holiest raptures of the lyre." Chief among them, besides the four just mentioned, are Adam of St. Victor, Jacopone, Bernard of Morlaix, and his sainted namesake of Clairvaux; although indeed there are hymns, the work of unknown com-

posers, little if at all inferior to theirs in lofty thought, musical sweetness, and deep emotion. In choosing a few specimens of their verses, the main difficulty arises from the number and excellence of the compositions which present themselves. It is a true *embarras de richesses*. Perhaps the best course will be to pass by poems more generally familiar, in favour of others less likely to be met with save by those who have made a special study of this branch of literature. And so I will not quote King Robert's hymn, *Veni Sancte Spiritus*, the loveliest, as Archbishop Trench deems, in the whole circle of sacred Latin poetry, because it is only a little less widely known than the *Veni Creator* —for which also, as we have seen, a royal author is claimed,—and, like it, may be found in almost any book of Catholic devotions. For like reasons I will not cite St. Bernard's *Jesu! dulcis memoria.* Nor shall I give the text of *Dies Iræ*. Daniel truly remarks, "Those who know no other Latin ecclesiastical poetry know this:" the grandest of all the productions of the medieval Muse, which so powerfully affected Goethe, and fragments of which were among the last words heard from the dying lips of Sir Walter Scott. Again, I may regard myself as dispensed from giving any of the four hymns[1] which have come down to us

[1] All four are upon the same theme, that of the Feast of Corpus Christi, for which at the bidding of Pope Urban IV. St. Thomas composed the office. Daniel finely remarks:—"Est venerabilis sacramenti laudator Thomas summus, quem non sine Numinis afflatu cecinisse credas, nec mireris sanctum poetam postquam hoc unum carminis thema spiritale et pæne cœleste tam præclare, ne

from St. Thomas Aquinas. All of them have a great place in high solemnities of the Latin Church, and one, the *Lauda Sion*, has become very widely known beyond the limits of that Communion through the music to which Mendelssohn has wedded it; music to which the highest praise that can be given is that it is no unworthy setting of the masterpiece of the Angelic Doctor. It is to another master of the art of musical sound that many owe a knowledge which probably they would not have otherwise possessed of the inimitably pathetic verses of Jacopone. To me, I confess, it is a signal proof of the depth of degradation to which ecclesiastical music has fallen in Italy, that a composer so redolent of the operatic footlights as Rossini, should have deemed the *Stabat Mater* a fitting subject for the exercise of his gifts. Still, painfully incongruous as are the "light quirks of music, broken and uneven," to which he has linked the richest offering made by medieval piety to the *Mater Dolorosa*, I am here under an obligation to him for contributing towards the widely diffused knowledge of that incomparable poem which relieves me from the necessity of transcribing it. Robert II., St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Bernard, Jacopone, and Thomas of Celano, I shall therefore pass over; nor shall I quote from Bernard de Morlaix, whose poem beginning—

"Hora novissima, tempora pessima sunt, vigilemus,"

first rescued from oblivion by Archbishop Trench, has

dicam unice, absolverit, prorsus in posterum obticuisse. Peperit semel, sed leonem."—*Thesaurus*, vol. ii. p. 98.

been published in all its best parts by Dr. Neale, with a translation from which the hymn *Jerusalem the Golden*, now so widely popular, is taken. The greatest remaining name of those which I have enumerated is Adam of St. Victor; and it is a very great name: "the foremost among the sacred Latin poets of the middle ages,"[1] Archbishop Trench judges, particularly specifying among his excellences his profound acquaintance with the theology of his time, the exquisite art and variety with which for the most part his verse is managed and his rhymes are disposed, their rich melody multiplying and ever deepening at the close, the strength which often he concentrates into a single line, his skill in conducting a story, and above all the evident nearness of the things which he celebrates to his own heart of hearts. Nothing is known about his life, beyond the fact that he belongs to the twelfth century of our era and was a monk of the great foundation of St. Victor at Paris. He was buried in the cloisters of that monastery, and his epitaph graven on a plate of copper remained there until the French Revolution. Out of the hundred and odd sequences of his which remain to us I shall here give only two. The following was composed for the Feast of All Saints:

"Supernæ matris gaudia
Repræsentet ecclesia;
Dum festa colit annua,
Suspiret ad perpetua.
In hac valle miseriæ,
Mater succurat filiæ;
Hic cœlestes excubiæ,
Nobiscum stent in acie.

"The Church on earth with answering love,
Echoes her Mother's joys above;
These yearly feast-days she may keep,
And yet for endless festals weep.
In this world's valley dim and wild,
That mother must assist the child;
And heavenly guard must pitch their tents,
And range their ranks in our defence.

[1] See *Sacred Latin Poetry*, p. 57.

Mundus, caro, dæmonia,
Diversa movent prœlia;
Incursu tot phantasmatum,
Turbatur cordis sabbatum.

Dies festos cognatio,
Simul hæc habet odio,
Certatque pari fœdere,
Pacem de terra tollere.

Confusa sunt hic omnia,
Spes, metus, mœror, gaudium,
Vix hora vel dimidia[1]
Fit in cœlo silentium.

Quam felix illa civitas,
In qua jugis solemnitas,
Et quam jocunda curia,
Quæ curæ prorsus nescia.

Nec languor hic, nec senium,
Nec fraus, nec terror hostium,
Sed una vox lætantium,
Et unus ardor cordium.

Illic cives angelici,
Sub ierarchia triplici,
Trinæ gaudent et simplici
Se monarchiæ subiici.

Mirantur nec deficiunt,
In illum, quem prospiciunt,
Fruuntur nec fastidiunt,
Quo frui magis sitiunt.

Illic patres dispositi,
Pro dignitate meriti,
Semota iam caligine,
Lumen vident in lumine.

The world, the flesh, and Satan's rage,
Their differing wars against us wage;
And when the phantom-hosts come on,
The Sabbath of the heart is gone.

This triple league, with fierce dislike,
At holy festivals would strike;
And set the battle in array,
To drive their peace from earth away.

And storms confused above us lower,
Of hope and fear and joy and woe;
And scarcely e'en for one half hour,
In silence in GOD'S House below.

That distant City, oh how blest, [rest!
Whose feast-days know nor pause nor
How gladsome is that Palace gate,
Round which nor fear nor sorrow wait!

Nor languor here, nor weary age,
Nor fraud, nor dread of hostile rage;
But one the joy, and one the song,
And one the heart of all the throng?

[1] Archbishop Trench quotes from Hugh of St. Victor (*De Claus. Animæ*, c 36), the following passage in explanation of this and the following line:—"De hoc secreto cordis dictum est: Factum est silentium in cœlo quasi media hora. Cœlum est quippe anima justi. Sed quia hoc silentium contemplationis et hæc quies mentis in hac vita non potest esse perfecta, nequaquam hora integra factum in cœlo dicitur silentium, sed quasi media: ut nec media plene sentiatur, cum prætermittitur quasi: quia mox ut se animus elevare cœperit, et quietis intimæ lumine perfundi, redeunte motu cogitationum confunditur et confusus cæcatur."—*Sacred Latin Poetry*, p. 320.

Hi sancti, quorum hodie Celebrantur solemnia, Iam revelata facie Regem cernunt in gloria.	The Saints whose praise to-day we sing, Are standing now before the Throne, And face to face behold the King, In all His Majesty made known.
Ille regina virginum, [num, Transcendens culmen ordi- Excuset apud Dominum Nostrorum lapsus criminum.	
Nos ad sanctorum gloriam, Per ipsorum suffragia, Post præsentem miseriam, Christi perducat gratia."	In that serene and glorious place, When this life's many toils are past, Christ, of His everlasting Grace, Grant us to join the Blest at last."

The English rendering, which is Dr. Neale's, is one of his best, but is marred by his unfaithfulness to the original. Without any hint to his readers, few of whom were likely to refer to the Latin text, he has omitted sixteen lines and mistranslated the last strophe, so that while professing to give Adam of St. Victor's poem, "one of the loveliest he ever wrote," he does not in truth give it, but merely an adaptation of it.

The other verses of Adam of St. Victor, which I shall present, are in honour of a Saint whose story has exercised a singular fascination over devout minds from the very date of her passion—"that holy child, the blessed Saint Agnes," as Cardinal Newman speaks, "who at the age of thirteen resolved rather to die than deny the faith, and stood enveloped in an atmosphere of purity, and diffused around her a heavenly influence in the very home of evil spirits into which the heathen brought her."[1] St. Jerome tells us in his rhetorical way that "the tongues and pens of all nations were employed in her praises who

[1] *Discourses to Mixed Congregations*, p. 57.

overcame both the cruelty of the tyrant and the tenderness of her age, and crowned the glory of chastity with that of martyrdom." And St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, and Prudentius,[1] all of whom belong to the century in which she suffered, supply abundant evidence of the enthusiastic cultus of which she was the object, and which they were zealous to spread. St. Martin of Tours was singularly devout to her, and one of the most striking of the sermons of Thomas à Kempis was composed for her festival. Nor has the lapse of fifteen centuries dimmed her memory in her native city. "St. Agnes," writes

[1] Prudentius's *Hymn on St. Agnes* is one of his best; but, like so much of his work, it is marred by undue length and ill-judged rhetorical ornament. It may with advantage be compared with the verses which I am about to cite from Adam of St. Victor. It opens finely:—

"Agnes sepulchrum est Romulea in domo;
Fortis puellæ, martyris inclitæ.
Conspectu in ipso condita turrium
Servat salutem Virgo Quiritium,
Nec non et ipsos protegit advenas
Puro ac fideli pectore supplices.
Duplex corona est præstita martyri
Intactum ab omni crimine virginal
Mortis deinde gloria liberæ."

And not less fine is the invocation of the recent martyr, with which he concludes:—

"O virgo felix, o nova gloria,
Cœlestis arcis nobilis incola,
Intende nostris colluvionibus
Vultum gemello cum diademate,
Cui posse soli cuntiparens dedit
Castum vel ipsum reddere fornicem.
Purgabor oris propitiabilis
Fulgore, nostrum si jecur impleas.
Nil non pudicum est quod pia visere
Dignaris, almo vel pede tangere."

Mrs. Jameson, "is the favourite saint of the Roman women. . . . Often have I seen the steps of her church [in the Piazza Navona], and the church itself, so crowded with kneeling worshippers . . . that I could not make my way through them."[1] The sequence which the "Schiller of the middle ages," to use Rambach's phrase, has consecrated to her, is one of the best examples of his majestic grace in narrative, of the "easy vigour" of his verse, and of the deep unconscious earnestness of his devotion. I attempt an English rendering of it, quite inadequate, as I know too well, but reproducing as faithfully as I can, both the metres and thought of the poet:

"Animemur ad agonem,
Recolentes passionem
Gloriosæ virginis.
Contractantes sacrum florem,
Respiremus ad odorem
Respersæ dulcedinis.

Pulchra prudens et illustris,
Jam duobus Agnes lustris
Addebat triennium:
Proles amat hanc præfecti
Sed ad ejus Virgo flecti
Respuit arbitrium.

Mira vis fidei,
Mira virginitas,
Mira virginei
Cordis integritas.
Sic Dei filius
Nutu mirabili
Se mirabilius
Prodit in fragili.

Languet amans, cubat lecto
Languor notus fit præfecto
Maturat remedia.
Offert multa, spondet plura
Perituros peritura
Sed vilescunt omnia.

To life's strife, our heart renewing,
Let us gird ourselves reviewing
How the Maid the victory won.
Flower divine! whose scents most precious
As we touch its leaves, refresh us
Till the battle's day is done.

Fair and wise and well descended,
Agnes, twice six summers ended,
Entered on her thirteenth year.
Her the prefect's son beholding
Seeks, a tale of love unfolding,
Which Christ's bride disdains to hear.

Oh wondrous power of faith,
Oh wondrous chastity,
Oh wondrous heart beneath,
The Virgin's constancy!
So doth our Lord most high,
By His almighty will,
To weak ones strength supply,
And with Himself fulfil.

Sick and sad the baffled lover
Lay: the prefect's eyes discover
Whence his pain: the Maid is brought;
Vain the gifts the vain man proffers,
Vile are all his richest offers,
In the faithful Virgin's thought.

[1] *Sacred and Legendary Art*, vol. ii. p. 604.

Nudam prostituit
Præses flagitiis ;
Quam Christus induit
Comarum fimbriis
Stolaque cœlesti.
Cœlestis nuncius
Assistit propius ;
Cella libidinis
Fit locus luminis ;
Turbantur incesti.

Disrobed, was Agnes sent
To vilest den of sin,
But Christ, her Lord, hath lent
A robe to fold her in,
A marvellous growth of hair.
Then was there seen by her
An angel messenger,
Who turning into light,
That loathsome cellar's night
The lewd confounded there.

Cæcus amans indignatur
Et irrumpens præfocatur
A maligno spiritu.
Luget pater, lugent cuncti ;
Roma flevit pro defuncti
Juvenis interitu.

Blind with rage the lover fumeth,
And is, when he thither cometh,
Choked by a malignant fiend.
Mourns the father : sorrowing for him
All in Rome with tears deplore him
Who, so young, meets such an end.

Suscitatur ab Agnete,
Turba fremit indiscrete :
Rogum parant Virgini.
Rogus ardens reos urit,
In furentes flamma furit
Dans honorem Numini.

Agnes prays, and he reviveth,
Which the crowd to such wrath driveth
That the pile for her they fire ;
She untouched, the flame outleaping
Slays her foes, the Highest reaping
Glory from their furious ire.

Grates agens Salvatori,
Guttur offert hæc lictori,
Nec ad horam timet mori,
Puritatis conscia.
Agnes, Agni salutaris
Stans ad dextram gloriaris,
Et parentes consolaris
Invitans ad gaudia.

Then her Saviour's power confessing,
Death no dread for her possessing,
To the lictor's axe, with blessing
Bows her head, Christ's unstained bride.
Lamb-like Maid in thy bright station
By the Lamb, who brought salvation,
Thou, thy parents' desolation
Soothing, bidst them to thy side.

Ne te flerent ut defunctam
Jam cœlesti sponso junctam :
His sub agni forma suam
Revelavit, atque tuam
Virginalem gloriam.
Nos ab agno salutari
Non permitte separari,
Cui te totam consecrasti :
Cujus ope tu curasti
Nobilem Constantiam.[1]

And lest they should mourn as perished
Thee, His bride so dearly cherished,
He, by vision, revelation
Gave them, of thy exaltation,
With His virgin glory crowned.
Pray for us ; permit us never
From His faith and love to sever,
Whose thou wert in full possession,
From whom, through thy intercession
Noble Constance healing found.

[1] On this line Daniel has the following note :—" Constantia fuit filia Constantini, gravi quidem morbo affecta. Quæ auditis miraculis a Domino per beatam Agnetem factis, venit ad ejus tumulum recuperandæ sanitatis gratia. Neque eam spes fefellit."—*Thesaurus*, vol. ii. p. 70.

Vas electum, vas honoris,
Incorrupti flos odoris,
Angelorum grata choris,
Honestatis et pudoris
Formam præbes sæculo.
Palma fruens triumphali,
Flore vernans virginali
Nos indignos speciali
Fac sanctorum generali
Vel subscribi titulo."

Vessel choice, of fame transcending,
Flower of sweetness never ending,
Thee, the Angel choirs commending,
Hymn, for truth and pureness blending,
Show the world their type in thee.
Thou, who victory's palm art bearing,
And the Virgin's crown art wearing,
Yet, for us unworthy caring,
Send us help, some place preparing,
For us in eternity.

The next hymn which I shall give is in another key. It is from the pen of a Churchman in the eleventh century, who may stand as a type of all that was highest and best in his age, and who was only less conspicuous for ability in the conduct of public affairs than for singleness of mind and sanctity of living. A stern reformer in a wicked and adulterous generation, St. Peter Damiani was no unworthy precursor and coadjutor of one greater than he—Hildebrand, his *Sanctus Satanas*—the most Titanic figure in the long line of Roman Pontiffs. Devoted from his youth to the severest practices of the monastic institute, it needed nothing less than a Pontifical threat of excommunication to withdraw him from his cell to the cares and duties of high ecclesiastical station. And gladly did he lay down his Cardinal's hat and his Ostian bishopric to return to his still retreat with his religious brethren at Santa Croce d'Avellano. It was probably there, in the calm evening of his laborious and ascetic day, and in the steady contemplation and expectation of its close, that these verses were written—"the *Dies Iræ* of individual life, as they are happily called by Dr.

Neale. For the excellent translation I have to thank Mr. Wrangham.

"Gravi me terrore pulsas
vitæ dies ultima,
Mœret cor, solvuntur renes,
læsa tremunt viscera;
Tuam speciem dum sibi
mens depingit anxia.

Quis enim pavendum illud,
explicet spectaculum,
Quum dimenso vitæ cursu
carnis ægra nexibus,
Anima luctatur solvi
propinquans ad exitum.

Perit sensus, lingua riget,
resolvuntur oculi,
Pectus palpitat, anhelat
raucum guttur hominis,
Stupent membra, pallent ora,
decor abit corporis.

Præsto sunt et cogitatus,
verba, cursus, opera,
Et præ oculis nolentis
glomerantur omnia:
Illuc tendat, huc se vertat,
coram videt posita.

Torquet ipsa reum suum,
mordax conscientia,
Plorat acta corrigendi
defluxisse tempora,
Plena luctu caret fructu
sera pœnitentia.

Falsa tunc dulcedo carnis
in amarum vertitur,
Quando brevem voluptatem
perpes pœna sequitur:
Jam quod magnum credebatur
nil fuisse cernitur.

Quæso Christe rex invicte,
tu succurre misero,
Sub extrema mortis hora
quum iussus abiero,
Nullum in me ius tyranno
præbeatur impio.

"O last day of life, thou mak'st me
With an awful terror shake,
Grieves the heart, the reins are loosened,
And the chastened vitals quake,
As the anxious mind depicteth
What the shape is thou wilt take.

For who is there can foreshadow
That dread spectacle of fear,
When life's journey well-nigh over,
From flesh-trammels to be clear,
The enfeebled spirit struggles,
And the end is drawing near?

Feeling dies, the tongue grows rigid,
And the eyes dissolve in death;
Palpitates the sick man's bosom,
Gasps his husky throat for breath;
Limbs are numb and lips grow pallid,
And all beauty vanisheth.

Then rise up old thoughts and sayings,
Habits formed, and actions done;
And, as an unwelcome vision,
Crowd upon him every one:
Turn he hither, stretch he thither,
From his sight they ne'er are gone.

Conscience' self with gnawing twinges,
Racks within his guilty breast,
He laments the fitting seasons
For amendment that are past:
Full of grief, but wholly fruitless,
Proves his penitence at last.

Fleshly pleasure's feigned sweetness
Then to bitterness is turned,
When the endless torment follows
By its short-lived transports earned,
What he once thought great, already
To be nothing is discerned.

Christ, unconquered King; I pray Thee
Be a sinner's help and tower:
When my summons for departure,
I receive at death's last hour,
O'er me let the impious tyrant
Arrogate no sovereign power.

Cadat princeps tenebrarum,
cadat pars tartarea ;
Pastor ovem iam redemptam
tunc reduc ad patriam,
Ubi te videndi causa
perfruar in sæcula."

Let the Prince of Darkness perish,
Neither let hell's kingdom stand ;
Shepherd! Thou Thy sheep, now ran-
Lead back to its fatherland. [somed,
Where I may enjoy for ever
Seeing Thee so close at hand."

And now let me give a few specimens of medieval sacred verse from unknown poets. The hymn "Verbum bonum et suave," one of the most popular throughout Europe during the middle ages, may come first, and I shall accompany it with an English version upon which Mr. Wrangham, undeterred by its consummate difficulties, has, at my request, heroically ventured. It is worthy of attention as an example of a mode of interpretation of Holy Scripture as far removed from the modern mind as is well conceivable. It does not fall within my present scope to inquire into the merits of the allegorizing method which beneath the text of the sacred writings discerns a mystical sense, or rather an indefinite number of mystical senses.[1] But, as a matter of fact, every expositor from St. Paul and St. Barnabas, not to go further back, down to Luther and Calvin pursued that method, and most carried it to lengths at which the Biblical student of our own days, formed in other schools, stands aghast.[2] The canonical books were for them,

[1] Four principal senses of Holy Scripture were recognized by the school I have in view, according to the verse :—

"Litera gesta refert, quid credas allegoria,
Moralis quid agas, quid speres anagogia."

[2] Dean Perowne characterizes the patristic interpretations as "allegorical cobwebs," and is of opinion that "for the first true

as St. Augustine speaks, "tot paginarum opaca secreta."[1] Not only in facts and persons, but in names and numbers, were believed to be hidden "treasures of wisdom and knowledge,"[2] to the extraction of which the devoutest minds and the subtlest intellects devoted incredible labour. Throughout the Old Testament they saw prefigured the personages and events of the new dispensation, and, in particular, the Mother of Christ, as her cult developed, became the centre of a whole system of typical allusion. "When thou hearest that God speaks in the bush," asks Theodorus, "seest thou not the Virgin?"[3] "She is the rod of the stem of Jesse; the Eastern Gate, ever shut, through which the High Priest alone goes in and out," says St. Jerome.[4] "The mystical new heavens, the fruitful vine," says St. Ephrem:[5] "the manna pleasanter than honey," says St. Maximus.[6] Such was the system of interpretation which the religious writers of the middle ages received from the Fathers, nor did they fail to better the instruction. It is well known how distasteful these similitudes were to Luther, over whose Rhadamanthine severity[7] in dealing with them, Daniel heaves a gentle sigh.

exposition of Scripture, and especially of the Old Testament, we must come to the time of the Reformation."—*The Book of Psalms*, Pref. xxv.

[1] S. Aug. *Confess.*, l. xi. c. 1.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] Harduin, *Concilia*, vol. i. p. 1655.
[4] Hier in *Is.* xi.
[5] *Opp. Syr.* t. 3, p. 607.
[6] *Hom.* 45.
[7] *Thesaurus*, vol. ii. p. 93.

"Verbum bonum et suave,
Personemus illud Ave
Per quod Christi fit conclave
Virgo, mater, filia.

Per quod Ave salutata
Mox concepit fecundata,
Virgo David stirpe nata,
Inter spinas lilia.[1]

Ave veri Salomonis
Mater, vellus Gideonis
Cuius magi tribus donis
Laudant puerperium:

Ave, solem genuisti
Ave, solem protulisti
Mundo lapso contulisti
Vitam et imperium.

Ave sponsa verbi summi,
Maris portus, signum dumi,
Aromatum virga fumi,
Angelorum domina:

Supplicamus: nos emenda,
Emendatos nos commenda
Tuo nato, ad habenda
Sempiterna gaudia."

"Word, good news and gladsome telling!
Forth now let that 'Hail!' be swelling,
Which fit home for Christ's indwelling
Virgin, mother, daughter, made.

Through that 'Hail's' sweet salutation
Straight a maid of David's nation
Fruitful grew in generation,
'Mid sharp thorns a lily bred.

Hail, true Solomon's maid-mother!
Gideon's fleece! whom, like none other
In thy travail with man's brother,
Wise men praise with threefold dower!

Hail, who bore the sun from heaven!
Hail, who birth to Him hast given!
To a world to ruin driven
Thou hast granted life and power.

Hail, the spouse that God's word chooses!
Mary-port, bright bush of Moses!
Spray that scents' sweet fumes diffuses!
Queen of the angelic host!

We beseech thee, purify us;
And, thus purified, stand by us,
When thy Son shall come to try us,
Lest our deathless joys be lost!"[2]

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[1] As Daniel remarks: "Ex illa licentia, quam illius ævi homines sibi sumpsisse novimus poeta propter ὁμοιοτέλευτον novam atque inauditam vocem sibi finxit."—Vol. ii. p. 94.

[2] "Neque tacendum est," observes Daniel, "hymnos et sequentias integras paucisque mutatis a profanis hominibus in usum suum esse conversa. Unum sufficiat exemplum sequentiæ, proprie ad beatissimam virginem pertinentis, nunc autem in potantium clamorem permutatæ: nam Germanos semper semperque potatores fuisse et futuros esse ex his quoque carminibus perspicuum est. Legitur autem Sequentia de vino apud Aufsessium Anzeiger, etc." II. p. 190:—

"Vinum bonum et suave
Bonis bonum, pravis prave,
Cunctis dulcis sapor, ave
Mundana lætitia.

Ave, felix creatura
Quam produxit vitis pura,
Omnis mensa fit secura
In tua presentia.

Ave color vini clari,
Ave sapor sine pari,
Tua nos inebriari
Digneris potentia.

Ave placens in colore,
Ave fragrans in odore,
Ave sapidum in ore
Dulcis linguæ vinculum."

Far more beautiful, but far less known, is a hymn on the Incarnation, printed for the first time by Dr. Neale in his volume of Sequences.[1] I will venture upon a translation of it, although I despair of presenting in any degree the exquisite simplicity and "tender grace" of the original.

"Lætare puerpera,
Læto puerperio;
Cujus pura viscera
Fœcundantur Filio:

Lacte fluunt ubera
Cum pudoris lilio:
Membra fovens tenera
Virgo lacte proprio.

Patris Unigenitus,
Per quem fecit omnia,
Hic degit humanitus
Sub matre paupercula:

Ibi sanctos angelos
Reficit lætitia:
Hic sitit et esurit
Degens in infantia.

Ibi regit omnia;
Hic a matre regitur:
Ibi dat imperia;
Hic ancillæ subditur:

"In thy joyful childbirth show
Heartfelt joy, thou pregnant one;
Whose unspotted womb is now
Teeming with the Eternal Son.

Purest lily, thy breasts fill,
Nor is maidenhood defiled,
With thine own milk, virgin still,
Thou doth feed thy little Child.

He, the Only Son, by whom
God the Father all things made
In a lowly mother's home
With our nature clad, is laid.

There to look upon His face,
Is of Angel Hosts the bread;
Here He holds an infant's place,
Thirsts and hungers, and is fed.

There as king of all He lives,
Here His Mother's word obeys;
There supreme commands He gives,
Here His life His handmaid sways.

"Ave sospes in molestis
In gulosis mala pestis,
Post amissionem vestis
Sequitur patibulum.

Monachorum grex devotus,
Omnis ordo, mundus totus,
Bibunt ad æquales potus
Et nunc et in saeculum.

Felix venter quem intrabis,
Felix lingua quam rigabis,
Felix os quod tu lavabis
Et beata labia.

Supplicamus, hic abunda
Per te mensa sit facunda
Et nos cum voce jucunda
Deducamus gaudia."

Upon this *carmen irrisorium* Daniel judiciously enough remarks: —"Ecclesia, tum temporis secura et tranquilla, eiusmodi nugas eadem passa est lenitate, qua in ecclesiasticis ædificiis, quæ gothica dicuntur, monstrosas figuras et alia inepta ornamenta."—Vol. i. p. 282.

[1] "Ex Missali Noviomensi."—*Sequentiæ*, p. 10.

Ibi summi culminis
Residet in solio ;
Hic legatus fasciis
Vagit in præsepio.

O homo, considera,
Revocans memoriæ
Quanta sunt hæc opera
Divinæ clementiæ.

Non desperes veniam
Si multum deliqueris :
Ubi tot insignia
Caritatis videris.

Sub Matris refugio
Fuge, causa veniæ :
Nam tenet in gremio
Fontem indulgentiæ.

Hanc salutes sæpius
Cum spei fiducia :
Dicens flexis genibus,
Ave plena gratia !

Quondam flentis lacrymas
Sedabas uberibus :
Nunc iratum mitigas
Pro nostris excessibus.

Jesu lapsos respice
Piæ Matris precibus ;
Emendatos effice
Dignos cœli civibus."

There on heaven's highest throne,
Glorious in His strength appears ;
Here is swathed with many a moan,
And in manger laid with tears.

Ponder well, O man, in thought
Bringing back to memory,
These transcendent wonders wrought
By divinest clemency.

Never let despair prevail,
Many though thy sins may be,
When thou goest o'er the tale
Of God's wondrous charity.

To the Mother go for grace,
To her side for pardon fly,
Nestling close to her sweet face,
See the fount of clemency.

Oft salute her lovingly,
Give to doubt and fear no place ;
Meekly kneeling on thy knee,
Say, 'Hail, Mary, full of grace !'

Once the milk from thy pure breast
Stayed His tears and infant cries,
Now for us, with sin oppressed,
When thou plead'st, His anger flies.

Jesus ! through Thy Mother's prayers,
Look on us with pitying eye,
Heal our souls, and make us heirs
Of Thy blissful realms on high."

M. Nicolas well asks, "Où est la poésie si elle n'est pas là dans sa plus vivante réalité et sa plus touchante expression ?" [1] It is like a picture of Fra Angelico's done into verse.

The following very beautiful little poem, which I take from Mone's collection, is in a different strain. My translation has the demerit of not preserving the original metre.

"Filii præsentia
Mater destituta,
Gabrielem nuntium
Sic est allocuta :

"Gone her Son, the Mother
Wept alone, alone ;
And to angel Gabriel
Thus did make her moan :

[1] *La Vierge Marie*, tom. iii. p. 286.

Ave plena gratia
Mihi protulisti;
Nunc amaritudine
Sum repleta tristi.

Subsequenter inquiens;
Dominus est tecum;
Heu iacet in tumulo,
Non est ultra mecum.

Omnis benedictio,
Quam tu spopondisti,
Mihi fit contraria
Propter mortem Christi."

'Once thy voice did greet me,
"Full of grace, all hail!"
Now, all full of sorrow,
I lament and wail.

'Next, "the Lord is with thee"
In my ear did sound:
Now He is far from me,
Lying in the ground.

'All the words of blessing
That to me were said,
Now are turned to mourning:
For my Son is dead.'"

Mone prints this poem from a MS. of the fourteenth century; but it was probably composed somewhat earlier.

During the last hundred and fifty years of the middle ages, if we reckon them to close with the taking of Constantinople in 1453, Latin poetry was in full decadence. The old founts of inspiration seemed to have run dry. Sinai and Calvary were deserted for Parnassus and Olympus. The Renaissance was the grave of medieval literature. In the new era imitation takes the place of invention, pedantry of inspiration; for an Adam of St. Victor, or a Jacopone, we have a Vida and a Sannazaro. Soon the impure hand of the renascent paganism was laid upon the offices of religion, and at one time the scheme was officially entertained of replacing the whole existing body of Breviary hymns by new compositions, in the spirit, metre, and language of classical Rome. It was to Zacharias Ferrerius that Clement VII. entrusted the task of manufacturing the desiderated verses, and the following doxology

may serve as a specimen of his "nova politissimaque carmina":—

> "Unus est divum sacer imperator
> Triplicis formæ, facie sub una,
> Qui polum, terras, tumidosque fluctus
> Temperat alti."

Ferrerius published his book with the Papal approbation, and Clement authorized the use of his compositions by the clergy in the divine office,[1] but, according to Merati, no one availed himself of the permission, which is much to be wondered at, for the new poetry was certainly in full harmony with the spirit of the age. Unfortunately, however, the versifiers of the Renaissance did not confine themselves to the production of turgid bombast of their own. The ecclesiastical authorities, if unable to get rid altogether of the Breviary hymns, were determined to "reform" them, that is, to reduce them to classical style and metre; and for this purpose they called to their aid from time to time the most approved pedants of the day. It is not necessary for me to give here the details of the Procrustean treatment which was pursued; and I gladly pass over the miserable tale, how the most beautiful and venerable verses suffered amputation, elongation, incision, and excision, at the hands of men whose highest accomplishment was to "torture one poor word a thousand ways." It was

[1] "Und auf dies Machwerk konnte Clemens VII. (cujus approbatio libro præfixa est) 1523, rescribiren:—ut quilibet sacerdos eosdem hymnos etiam in divinis legere et eis uti possit concedimus. Sed, ut ait Merati, nemo ea facultate usus est."—DANIEL'S *Thesaurus*, vol. iv. p. 294.

in the pontificate of Urban VIII. that the hymns in the Offices of the Latin Church assumed the form in which they have been since current. Three members of the Society of Jesus, Famianus Strada, Tarquinius Gallucius, and Hieronymus Petruccius, were entrusted with the task of reducing them "ad bonum sermonem et metricas leges." A few escaped with very slight alteration; the great majority suffered a process of recasting, the result being not unlike that achieved by Borrimini in St. John Lateran, or by Fuga in St. Mary Major. Archbishop Trench justly observes, "Well-nigh the whole grace and beauty and even vigour of the compositions have disappeared in the transformation."[1] It was in Urban's time, too, that most of the new hymns were added to the Breviary, although some are of later date. These compositions do not, in strictness, fall within my present subject, and there is little to tempt one to an excursion among them; for in their frigid artificiality and tasteless pedantry they represent the last stage of poetical decay.

And now let us return to the point from which we started, the great value of the body of sacred poetry of which we have taken, if I may so speak, a bird's-eye view, as a revelation of the medieval mind. The middle ages are rightly so called, standing as they do

[1] *Sacred Latin Poetry*, Introd. p. 15. In Daniel's first volume the ancient text and the modern Breviary reading of many hymns are given side by side.

halfway between the ancient and modern worlds; one foot in each, but belonging to neither. The ancient civilizations had emptied themselves into them. In philosophic Greece, in imperial Rome, in wild Germany, in theocratic Judæa, are the sources of their intellectual, moral, and spiritual life. And dead as they are to us in many respects in this new time, in others they yet live. "Far off," "yet ever nigh," we come upon them in a thousand ways in our daily walk through life. They are perhaps the most fruitful period in all history for the philosophical student, unhappily by no means so common a character among us as could be desired. And in the verse of the medieval hymnists we see into the inner shrine of the religion of that period; into its very heart. They interpret for us its external action, and unfold for us the secret of its most distinctive peculiarities. The works of the hands of Orcagna and Giotto, of Niccolo Pisano and Lorenzo Maitani, of the forgotten artists of storied pane and illuminated missal, have a fuller and deeper meaning for us if regarded in the light shed from the pages of the monkish lyrists, where the tale of those material monuments is "writ large" for those who have eyes to see.

The primary and most striking characteristic, then, of the medieval period is that which is indicated in the title so often given to it of the age of faith. The mind of Europe was saturated with the spiritual, the supernatural, the mysterious. Things possessed were counted as dross in comparison with things

hoped for; things visible faded into nothingness before the keen vision of things unseen. Every one who has the most rudimentary knowledge of the middle ages knows this. And, perhaps, it would not be unfair to say that many a scholar who deems his knowledge of those ages to be by no means rudimentary knows little more than this of their dominant element. But, in truth, we have made but very little progress towards a correct apprehension of the medieval mind by merely grasping the fact of its absorbing supernaturalism. Intense realization of a spiritual world is a common enough fact in human history. In Greece up to the beginning of the third century before the Christian era, in Rome until the commencement of that era, faith in invisible realities surrounding man on every side, in powers and agencies of a superhuman character, directly and intimately affecting him, was as strong, as unquestioning, as operative in the popular mind, as it was in the time of St. Bernard and St. Francis of Assisi. To understand the middle ages it is necessary not merely to discern the fact of their supernaturalism, but correctly to appreciate its character. It is not enough to know that they were penetrated by the most vivid conceptions of a world-transcending sense: it is essential to know also of what kind those conceptions were; and here perhaps comparison many serve as a most useful instrument. Pagan antiquity and medieval Christianity were both instinct with the supernatural. But in their views of it there were radical differences of

vital practical importance; and those differences I shall endeavour briefly to exhibit.

The most striking fact about ancient Paganism, as it lived and ruled in the popular mind [1] of Greece and Rome, is the well-nigh total absence from it of any idea at all nearly answering to that which the term "God" conveys, more or less distinctly, to the European mind of the present day. It has been profoundly remarked that the word "contains a theology in itself." But even to the most uncultured and unscientific in Christian countries, it denotes—however difficult they might find it to express the notion—a Supreme Being, the Creator, Upholder, Governor, and Sovereign Lord of all: self-dependent, and the only Being who is such; Eternal and the only Eternal; all-sufficient, all-blessed, and ever-blessed; the Supreme Good; omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, ineffably one, absolutely perfect; sovereign over His own actions, though always according to the eternal Rule of right and wrong, which is Himself; yet in the works of creation, conservation, government, retribution, making Himself, as it were, the minister and servant of all; taking an interest and having a sympathy in the matters

[1] I say "the popular mind." I am far from ignoring the glimpses of this great idea which visited from time to time "those wise old spirits who," in Jeremy Taylor's happy phrase, "preserved natural reason and religion in the midst of heathen darkness." Take for instance—and it is the most striking instance known to me—the fragment of Xenophanes preserved by Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* v. p. 601):

> Εἷς θεὸς ἔν τε θεοῖσι καὶ ἀνθρώποισι μέγιστος
> Οὔτι δέμας θνητοῖσιν ὁμόιιος οὐδὲ νόημα.

of time and space, and imposing on rational beings, in whose hearts He has written the moral law, the duty of worship and service.[1] Of this great idea we find but small trace in the popular theology of the ancient world. It is therefore that Clement of Alexandria, in a noteworthy passage, speaks of the polytheists of Greece as Atheists. "With reason," he writes, "I call those Atheists who know not the true God;"[2] and he refers to St. Paul's phrase, ἄθεοι ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, the full force of which is generally so little apprehended. Again, in another place in the same treatise he upbraids them as "foolish and silly men," who, defaming the supercelestial region, have dragged religion down to the ground by fashioning to themselves earth gods; and by going after created objects instead of the uncreated Deity, have sunk into deepest darkness. For the nearest approximation in classical antiquity to what we understand by the word God, we must turn not to any of the anthropomorphic deities, but to that vague, mysterious, awful power, personified as Fate or the Fates, which ruled irresistibly, not only over the generations of mortal men, but also over the "gods many and lords many" of Olympus and the Roman Pantheon. Deep down in the heart of the ancient world, underlying all religious conceptions, alike of the noblest minds and of the most vulgar, was the idea of a Supreme Will, irresistible,

[1] See the very fine passage in Cardinal Newman's *Idea of a University*, p. 63 (Third Edition), from which the foregoing sentence has been abbreviated.

[2] *Protrept.* c. 11, § 23.

inscrutable, inexorable; and this all-pervading Fatalism is the key to the religions and the philosophies of Paganism.[1] There is a profound truth in the words of Petronius, "Primus in orbe Deos fecit Timor." Men turned shudderingly away from the thought of a dark unapproachable "stream of tendency," "non lenis precibus" to the intermediate existences which they supposed to direct the phenomena of the external world. As Mr. Grote observes, "Divine personal agents were invoked as the producing and sustaining powers of Nature." "Men asked themselves, 'Who rains and thunders? Who produces earthquakes?'"[2] And they peopled the heaven above and the earth beneath and the waters under the earth with beings who were, indeed, superhuman, but yet were of like passions with themselves. They conceived of human life as a struggle with destiny, hopeless in the event, however protracted, and they turned to the kindly and beautiful earth-gods for aid while the struggle lasted. Those deities might, at all events, be propitiated. By omens, by oracles, by sortilege, by the science of the *Augurs*, by the art of the *Haruspices*,

[1] It is not necessary to cite authorities for a proposition which will be admitted by every competent scholar. But I may remark that the words of the Chorus at the close of the noblest production of the Greek tragic Muse—

πεπρωμένης
οὐκ ἔστι θνητοῖς ξυμφορᾶς ἀπαλλαγή,

(*Antigone*, 1300), sum up the whole matter as the classical mind conceived of it.

[2] Grote's *Plato*, vol. ii. p. 2, 3rd edit. Mr. Grote happily refers to Strepsiades' question in the *Nubes* (364): "ἀλλὰ τίς ὕει;"

their pleasure might be divined. Nay, more, it was possible for man to confer upon them gratifications, and to bargain with them,—"votis pacisci," as the poet speaks. Over the dim mysterious region beyond the grave they were indeed powerless. This world was the scene of their activity: but even in this world it was only the things of sense that were under their control. They could give their votaries wealth, power, voluptuous delights: on those who neglected or offended them they might inflict all temporal misfortunes, or even death itself—the greatest of calamities; but upon the immaterial part of man even the "fulminantis magna manus Jovis" had no power. With the soul, the conscience, the affections, the gods were not concerned. Virtue did not appease nor vice repel them.[1] They were in no sense the guardians of the moral law, nor the ministers of that righteous retribution of which we are warned by the teachings of our natural conscience. Ancient polytheism enshrined no ethical code, presented no standard to which life should be conformed, had nothing to offer to the inquiring mind or restless heart. Its priests were in no sense spiritual teachers, but mere officers of a cult. It witnessed, indeed, to the existence of a world of unseen beings surrounding man; but, as has been said, it confined their

[1] If Horace's "Immunis aram si tetigit manus" be cited against this view, it should be remembered that the poet was writing not as the exponent, but as the corrector of the popular creed. And a similar explanation may be given of the numerous passages which may be quoted to the same effect.

action to the physical order. Its office was to assuage the fear which had called it into being, and it did this by turning away men's eyes from the darker problems of human existence and concentrating their attention upon the finite. To make the most of to-day was its highest Gospel, and the function of its gods was to help men in this task. Hence what Heine calls "the cheerful intoxication of life" in pagan antiquity, a life in which there is no element of spiritualism: in which both the intellect of man and the invisible immaterial powers which are above man exist but to minister to the cravings of his bodily senses. It is not to be wondered at that philosophy, when it arose, turned away in loathing from such conceptions. The instinct of the fierce democracy of Athens was not at fault in recognizing in Socrates a foe to the ancient gods; although indeed it was by a very different thinker that the most deadly wound was inflicted upon the polytheism of the ancient world. It was chiefly through the influence of the school of Epicurus that the deities of classic paganism fell into contempt, and that men learnt at the same time to trample under foot the religious idea itself.

But I must not linger over the decadence of classic polytheism, nor pause to consider the influence exercised by the various sects of philosophy whose rise was contemporaneous with its decline. Let us repass the intervening centuries, and return to the period whose religious poetry is our immediate subject. The medieval view of the supernatural differs from that of

antique paganism in two very important particulars; first, as to its nature, and then as to its sphere of action. In the place of the idea of blind Fate which underlay the old polytheism, we find in the middle ages the great Theistic conception which had been transmitted from the Hebrew people: a conception of a Living God, and the Fountain of Life; a Supreme Disposer of Events, and Judge of Men, but a Hearer of Prayer; as merciful as great, and standing in the closest, the most direct, and most immediate relations with the children of men. Long the hidden treasure of a small and exclusive tribe of Northern Semites, this conception had been cast by Christianity into a new shape through the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Cross; and, stamped with the image of the Eternal Child and the Man of Sorrows, had become the "current coin"[1] of the Western world. Through all the clouds and darkness of error and passion, the puerile fables, the ludicrous superstitions which hang over those middle ages, the great thought of the Infinite God revealed in the Word-made-Flesh, whom to know is life, but who, in St. Augustine's phrase, "non cognoscitur nisi amando," shines forth in luminous beauty.

This was the *Oriens ex alto*, the day-spring from

[1] It is hardly necessary to recall the familiar and beautiful lines:—

"Tho' truths in manhood darkly join,
Deep-seated in our mystic frame,
We yield all blessing to the name
Of Him that made them current coin."

In Memoriam, xxxvi.

on high, before whose "bright beams of light" the dark and abhorred vision of Fate fled away like a phantom of the night. And with it the earth-gods disappeared too. They were cast out together with the fear which had evoked them. But the region which they had occupied in the human imagination was not to remain vacant. It was gradually peopled by a host of glorified beings, saintly and angelic, the development of whose cultus—as a matter of fact, and apart from all theories—may be traced step by step, as the new religion passed out of what may be called its fluid state, and hardened into ritual and dogmatic forms. Nothing, however, can be more erroneous than the view which regards what has been called "the Christian Mythology," as merely a new edition of that of ancient Paganism. It is a view which has been held widely and carried far in modern times, but which is by no means new. Fourteen hundred years ago we find Faustus, the Manichean, objecting to St. Augustine, "You have turned the idols of the heathen into your martyrs, whom you worship with similar prayers."[1] And so writers of our own day have sought to find Apollo beneath the lineaments of Christ, and to discern in His Virgin Mother a pale and passionless Venus. It is easy to see how this theory arose. There can be no question that the Church, as she struggled upwards to imperial power, borrowed largely from the outward ornaments of the pagan religion for her ritual, as she

[1] S. August. c. *Faust*, xx. 4

used the existing philosophy for the purposes of her teaching; and Theodoret, writing in the fifth century, presses it as an argument upon the heathen that "the Lord had introduced his own dead in the place of their gods." "Of these," he says, "He hath made a riddance; their honour he hath conferred upon those."[1] But even in the most ignorant and superstitious minds among the adherents of the new faith, confusion could hardly have arisen between the anthropomorphic divinities whom they had forsaken, and the new objects of their veneration. If any fact stands out as clear beyond a doubt in the history of Christian teaching, where so much is doubtful, it is this—that from St. Paul to Savonarola the deities of classic paganism were undeviatingly regarded as devils. Such resemblances as may be traced between the old gods and the supernatural protectors, intercessors, patrons to whom men looked in medieval Christendom, are confined to the accidental externals of worship. Not only was there the widest difference between their attributes, their legends, and the manner in which they were conceived to operate; but above and beyond this, it is certain that, however far the cultus of angelic existences and "divine men" was carried in the middle ages, the supreme religious honours of the altar were never paid to them.[2] The

[1] Theod. *Adv. Gentiles*, viii.

[2] So St. Augustine in words as applicable to the whole medieval period as to his own:—"Quis autem audivit aliquando fidelium stantem sacerdotem ad altare etiam super sanctum corpus martyris ad Dei honorem cultumque constructum, dicere in precibus, 'Offero

"Sacrifices of Masses" round which, as I have said, medieval religion centred, were offered to God alone.

So much as to the essential difference between the classical and the medieval view of the nature of the powers invisible to man's bodily sight, but potent over human life. Nor is the difference less in the view taken of the sphere of their action. The life theory of paganism is as far removed as possible from that of the middle ages. The ancient Greek or Roman, to whom human life was its own end, turned away from the tomb little curious to pry into its desolating darkness, or, if he at any time admitted the thought of it, sought thereby to enhance the value of the fleeting hour, to—

"Spice his fair banquet with the dust of death."

Far other was the aspect in which the grave presented itself to the men of medieval Christendom. For them it was not dark, or, if dark, only so with excess of light. Their eyes were steadily fixed upon it in trembling hope, as "janua vitæ," and in the illumination from the next world which streamed through it, they looked at their present scene, and judged of human life. And their judgment of human life had this in common with that of classical antiquity, that they regarded it as a conflict. But it was no longer a hopeless conflict. Man from a victim had become a warrior. He might serve under an invincible Captain, and be more than conqueror, not only

tibi sacrificium, Petre, vel Paule, vel Cypriane'?" . . . "Non autem esse ista sacrificia Martyrum novit, qui novit unum quod etiam illic offertur sacrificium Christianorum."—*De Civ. Dei*, l. viii. c. 27.

over "mors indomita," but over a very different class of enemies, of whose existence the Roman poet had never dreamed. The great battlefield of the world, as medieval thought judged, was the heart of man, and the supremely important fact about man was that he was "master of his fate"; his will was free; he might choose his side. His real enemies were not the sufferings of this present life, but ceaseless unseen foes, who had their best allies in the cravings of his own lower nature. Ever to war against these—"to resist," if need be, "unto blood, striving against sin"—such was the medieval view of man's true part in the fragment of his life *here*. His reward was *there;* the victor's crown beyond the grave, the beatific vision "far in the spiritual city."

It is manifest how this view of human existence must have transformed the world for those who held it, not otiosely, as a notion, but with the most vivid and real apprehension, as a fact. The material universe, and the senses whereby it appeals to us, which had been all in all to antique paganism, are no longer the end of life, but instruments of probation. Self-denial and patience—continere et sustinere [1]—to

[1] "Duo sunt, quæ in hac vita veluti laboriosa nobis præcipiuntur, continere et sustinere. Jubemur enim continere ab his quæ in hoc mundo dicuntur bona, et sustinere ea quæ in hoc mundo abundant mala. Illa continentia, ista sustinentia vocatur. Duæ virtutes quæ mundant animam, et capacem faciunt divinitatis. In frenandis libidinibus et coërcendis voluptatibus, ne seducat quod male blanditur, et enervet quod prosperum dicitur, continentia nobis opus est: non credere felicitati terrenæ, et usque ad finem quærere felicitatem, quæ non habet finem. Ut autem est continentia, felicitati mundi non credere, i ta sustinentiæ est, infelicitati mundi non cedere."—Aug. *Ser.* 38 init.

give no credence to the world's estimate, whether of felicity or infelicity, such are the two great principles proposed for the regimen of life. The whole body of medieval religious verse may be truly said to be a long refrain upon the theme *De Contemptu Mundi.* But it is curious to observe how through the fierce asceticism of the age there thrills a strain of the loftiest and most exultant jubilation, such as the world had never known before. Life was not sad to those grown-up children, stern as was the way in which they viewed it. The literature of the cloister, in which that view found its most perfect expression, was not the work of unhappy men. We take up, for example, the letters written by St. Anselm while a monk at Bec, and we are amazed at what Dean Church happily calls the "almost light-hearted cheerfulness" which breathes through them. And yet he and his fellows had given up all which in the ordinary judgment of men makes life worth living: worldly wealth, the tenderest and most sacred human relations, nay even their own wills. They might well seem to have lost their life. They appear to have found it. Nothing is more striking than the contrast between the joy and peace which breathe through the austerest medieval verse, and the deep undertone of melancholy that pervades the strain of the most voluptuous of the ancient poets.

The great difference then between the conception of the sphere of supernatural action in the two epochs arose from this, that medieval religion embraced, and judged of supreme importance, that immaterial side

of man's nature which Greek and Roman polytheism ignored. The visible manifestations of the unseen spiritual powers were indeed believed by our forefathers in the middle ages to be matters of the most ordinary occurrence. Like the ancients, they accounted as miraculous everything abnormal in the physical order; or to speak more correctly, they drew the slightest distinction between the ordinary and the extraordinary action of the Divine volition to which they referred all phenomena. But, unlike the ancients, they recognized with a keenness which it is very difficult for us properly to appreciate, the direct influence of the spiritual order upon the soul of man. It was as if their eyes had been opened and they saw the things which transcend sense, as objective realities. The visible world fades into nothingness before the "vision splendid" of the open heavens, or only retains its power to please because of the "celestial light" wherewith it is apparelled. The first of the long succession of hymnists of whom I have been writing struck the keynote of all in accounting the most coveted prizes of life false and frivolous as visions of the night.[1] It was the unseen which was

[1] "Sunt nempe falsa et frivola,
Quæ mundiali gloria
Ceu dormientes egimus:
Vigilemus, hic est veritas.

Aurum, voluptas, gaudium,
Opes, honores, prospera,
Quæcunque nos inflant mala,
Fit mane, nil sunt omnia."

PRUDENTIUS: *Hymnus ad Galli Cantum.*

true and real: the seen which was delusive and phantasmal. The great fact to the men of Christendom was that they were citizens of a spiritual empire not subject to the conditions of time and space, in which the Saint who hundreds of years before had thrown off "this earthly load of death called life" was side by side with them, though their eyes were holden that they saw him not. It was no mere flight of the imagination when the monkish poet turned to the martyred Roman maiden for help in life's strife; or when the knightly crusader, bowing his head to the Saracen axe, found succour in the thought of his fellowship in the passion of his glorified patroness.[1] It was just in this spirit of realization of the timeless unseen that the medieval artists worked. Not time but eternity, was the medium in which they saw the sacred persons and events they set themselves to body forth. Thus it is that they bring together, without a thought of anachronism, Saints whose work was done in ages widely differing: thus that they depict the Apostles, not as Syrian peasants, but as princes over all the earth: thus that they invest the Mother of the King of Saints with "the crown of pure gold" and the "raiment of needlework." They were realists in their way, and of an intense kind. But it was the realism, not of sight, but of faith. The great difference between the view of the classical and the medieval mind as to the relations of man with the

[1] "Et lors me seignai, et m'agenoillai au pie de l'un d'eulz qui tenoit une hache danoise à charpentier, et dis; 'Ainsi mourut sainte Agnès.'"—JOINVILLE.

supernatural may be summed up in the statement that the one projected this world into the invisible, the other brought the invisible world into this; the one materialized the unseen, the other spiritualized the seen.

It is often said that history is ever repeating itself, and in a certain sense this saying is true. Especially interesting and instructive are the similitudes which may be traced between the movements of man's intellect in different ages, and under diverse conditions of life. Thus a parallel curiously close, in some respects, might be drawn between the progress of the European mind from the age of Socrates to the age of Juvenal, and from the close of the medieval period to our own day. The philosophy called Baconian has proved as powerful a solvent as the doctrine of Epicurus. As physical science has advanced, phenomena of the material universe once most mysterious and awful have yielded up their secrets; while in the lime-light of criticism, sacred stories long received as veritable histories have been exhibited as legendary myths, and documents for ages venerated for the great names attached to them, as mosaics unskilfully put together long after their reputed authors had passed away. Man may say in the nineteenth century—

> "It is not now as it hath been of yore,
> Turn where I may,
> By night or day,
> The things which I have seen I now can see no more."

"Heaven" no longer "lies about us" as it encom-

passed the men of medieval Christendom. The supernatural, with its "trailing clouds of glory," recedes from our view: as we gaze, we perceive it—

> "die away,
> And melt into the light of common day."

The action of a Divine Will is denied alike in the physical and the spiritual order: nay, the very existence of the spiritual order is denied, and with it conscience, free-will, and moral responsibility. Matter and force, we are told, explain everything: and force we are assured "is a quality of matter," whatever that may mean. Again the shadow of an iron necessity falls upon the world. On every hand we witness what has been called "the sad and terrible spectacle of a generation of men and women, professing to be cultivated, looking around in purblind fashion and finding no God in the universe." Nor is this all. The spirit of the age has penetrated within the Christian camp, and even in those whose devotional instincts are the strongest, and whose spiritual aspirations the most fervent, religion has lost much of its objective character. This fact is very clearly shown, as is natural, in the religious poetry of the period. The eye of the contemporary hymnist is turned not outwards but inwards. Thus if we take up the widely popular volume known as *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, the contrast between the old and the new phases of religious feeling is very striking. The translations or adaptations from medieval sources, boldly objective, even when most

mystical, are removed by something more than mere centuries of time from the introspective subjectivity of their eighteenth or nineteenth century companions. Religion is becoming less a creed and more an emotion: it is passing from the region of persons and things to the domain of phrase and sentiment. It is no longer the great fact upon which the public order is based, but a private opinion or an individual speculation.

Such is, in brief, the change which has come over European thought with regard to the supernatural since the close of the middle ages; and it is a change which fills many pure and pious souls with dismay. The devout mind turns sadly from such a time as ours to the earlier and simpler epoch when the questionings of the modern spirit had not perplexed the understanding nor troubled the heart of man; reverts fondly to it, as age reverts to the walks of childhood, where—

> "the soul discerns
> The dear memorial footsteps unimpaired
> Of her own native vigour; thence can hear
> Reverberations and a choral song,
> Commingling with the incense that ascends,
> Undaunted, toward the imperishable heavens,
> From her own lonely altar."

It is natural: nor, remembering always that our work is in the age in which our day is cast, not "among the mouldered lodges of the past," is such retrospection without its use. The man may learn from the child: the nineteenth century from the thirteenth. Things hidden from the wise and

prudent are revealed to babes. The folly of the superstitious may be wiser than the wisdom of the sceptic.

The existence of the supernatural is the question of the day. It is too large a question for me to enter upon here: nor indeed does its discussion fall within my present scope. I will merely observe how fatal it is in such matters to put aside facts for theories, to take "the high priori road," and to ignore the collective experience of the human race which we call history, as well as the individual experiences for a knowledge of which such countless sources are open to us. The aspirations and emotions of the soul are facts which the physicist may ignore if he pleases—they do not come within his sphere—but they are still facts. Faith rests upon the need of believing. In its unique adaptation to the wants of man's soul is the strongest evidence of Christianity. The surest foundation of religion lies in man's spiritual intuitions, in the voice of conscience, in the sense of the infinite. No philosophy can long satisfy him which ignores those intuitions, which refers that voice, whether to the action of the physical organism, or to "the habit of judging from the point of view of all, not of one;" which in place of "living bread" offers him the stone of natural science to satisfy an immortal hunger.

These are indeed what Pascal calls "reasons of the heart." But who that knows human nature can deny the cogency of such reasons? The philosophers of materialism do not know human nature. Their

capital error is that they only see one side of it, the lowest, which they mistake for the whole. Their "learned ignorance" will not long close the ear of the world to the voice of the heart telling of the things which the senses report not: revealing that which is not indeed opposed to but above sense. All things in the affairs of men have their ebbs and flows. That great tide of spiritualism which so long watered the earth and blessed it, has for a season been receding. Bare are many portions of its ancient bed: parched are many lands which once drank of its waters. But let no man dream that it shall be dried up, for its sources are divine. However changed its course by the moral and spiritual earthquakes which shake the world, it will flow on through the ages and acquire,

> "if not the calm
> Of its early mountainous shore,
> Yet a solemn peace of its own,
> As it grows, as the towns on its margo
> Fling their wavering lights
> On a wider, statelier stream:
> As the banks fade dimmer away—
> As the stars come out and the night-wind
> Brings up the stream
> Murmurs and scents of the infinite Sea."

CHAPTER IV.

THE RENAISSANCE AND LIBERTY.

I PROPOSE in this chapter to examine the question whether the meaning very generally put upon the word Renaissance is true. Renaissance or new birth of what? "Of freedom," we are answered by a crowd of writers in great repute at the present day. Thus, M. Michelet:—"L'aimable mot de Renaissance ne rappelle aux amis du beau que l'avénement d'un art nouveau et le libre essor de la fantaisie. Pour l'érudit, c'est la rénovation des études de l'antiquité; pour les légistes, le jour qui commence à luire sur le discordant chaos de nos vieilles coutumes. Est-ce tout?" And he decides that it is by no means all. "Le seizième siècle," he tells us, "dans sa grande et légitime extension, va de Colomb à Copernic, de Copernic à Galilée, de la découverte de la terre à celle du ciel. L'homme s'y est retrouvé lui-même."[1] So, turning to contemporary English writers, we find that Mr. Pater understands by the word "a general stimulus and enlightening of the human mind," "an outbreak of

[1] *Histoire de France*, vol. vii. Int., p. 1.

the human spirit," the qualities of which were "the care for physical beauty, the worship of the body, the breaking down of those limits which the religious system of the Middle Ages imposed upon the heart and the imagination."[1] Mr. Symonds holds similar views; he tells us that what the word Renaissance really means is "new birth to liberty—the spirit of mankind recovering consciousness and the power of self-determination, recognizing the beauty of the outer world and of the body through art, liberating the reason in science and the conscience in religion, restoring culture to the intelligence, and establishing the principle of political freedom."[2] It should be observed that Mr. Symonds regards the Protestant Reformation as being merely a phase of this great movement—and here I think he is undoubtedly right. Once more, Mr. Freeman, discoursing before the University of Cambridge of the *Unity of History*, says: "The revival of learning in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries marks, as is agreed on all hands, one of the great epochs in the history of the mind of man. . . . That age was an age when the spirit of man cast away trammels by which it had long been fettered; it was an age when men opened their eyes to light, against which they had been long closed from ages. . . . The revival of learning which brought the men

[1] Pater's *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, Pref., p. xi.

[2] Symonds' *Renaissance in Italy: Age of the Despots*, p. 30; so at page 13, we read "The Renaissance was the liberation of humanity from a dungeon."

of our modern world face to face with the camp before Ilios and with the Agoré of Athens was indeed a revolution which amounted to hardly less than a second birth of the human mind."[1] It would be easy to multiply quotations to the same effect. But these which I have given from four popular writers of different schools may suffice for my present purpose. It will be seen that they all four concur in regarding freedom as the chief note of the Renaissance. It is defined by one, in express terms, and impliedly by the other three, as "the new birth to liberty" of the modern world. There is something very engaging about this definition. It is no rhetorical flourish, but a simple statement of fact, when liberty, "best beloved of best men," is celebrated as the very breath of life to all that is most excellent in human society, "rarefying and enlightening our spirits like the influence of heaven."[2] It is not too much to say that it is in the political order what freewill is in the moral, that it is "the nurse of all great wits," at whose fair breast, art and science and literature are most purely and happily reared. If the movement known as the Renaissance was indeed a new birth to liberty, no words are too strong to express its claim upon the veneration of mankind. Whether this is a true definition is a question of fact, for the determination of which ample evidence exists, and that question I now proceed to consider.

[1] *Comparative Politics*, p. 296.
[2] Milton's *Areopagetica.*

But as liberty is a word

> Defamed by every charlatan,
> And soiled with all ignoble use,

I shall here set down, once for all, the sense in which I understand it; namely, the absence of restraints upon the true development and right exercise of the human faculties. In the political order, protection from such restraints is the very *raison d'être* of government; for the end of government is justice, and justice is rightly described by the jurisconsult as "constans et perpetua voluntas jus suum cuique tribuendi;" nor is there any more indisputable "right" or sacred prerogative of man, than to live according to the laws of his being. To uphold this right over the might, whether of "purple tyrants," or of "the sovereign people" collected around ballot-boxes, is the prime function of the State. It is observed by Milton: "The whole freedom of man consists either in spiritual or civil liberty. As for spiritual, who can be at rest, who can enjoy anything in this world with contentment, who hath not liberty to serve God and to save his soul? . . . . The other part of our freedom consists in the civil rights and advancements of every person according to his merit."[1] "This is not the liberty which we can hope, that no grievance ever should arise in the commonwealth; that let no man in this world expect; but when complaints are freely heard, deeply considered, and speedily reformed, then is the utmost

[1] *Ready Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth.*

bound of civil liberty obtained that wise men look for."[1] Harsh and crabbed must be any speech of mine in continuation of these majestic sayings. Still, if I may venture to carry on the thought therein expressed, I would affirm that, in the purely intellectual province, liberty is the undimmed possession of inward light, the enjoyment of "the vision and the faculty divine," unobscured by arbitrary rules, unrestricted by false conventionalisms—there are rules which are not arbitrary, and conventionalisms which are not false—whereby the thinker is enabled to discern, after his measure, the objective reality of things—to look through phenomena upon the venerable face of Nature (natura naturans, not natura naturata, as the schoolmen distinguish), to apprehend Truth in his own mind, and creatively to fashion it there. For Truth is the object of the human intellect in whatever department of thought engaged; and where its bright beams are shut out there is no freedom, but—worst imprisonment—the darkened mind becomes the dungeon of itself. Philosophy, morals, art, do but contemplate different sides of Truth, for nothing but Truth is good or beautiful, and nothing is good or beautiful that is not true; all truth, goodness, and beauty of which we have knowledge being but the faint emanations, the dim shadows, of Him who alone, in the highest sense, Is.

And now, turning aside from these high matters, let us, before we enter upon the inquiry immediately

[1] *Areopagetica.*

before us, glance briefly upon one of the greatest difficulties of the historian, as distinguished from the annalist—chronology. It is easy to assign dates for specific facts. It is exceedingly hard to give them for vast and complex movements of the human mind, which, with the great religious, intellectual, and social phenomena that they produce, are alone worthy of serious study in the records of the past. For such movements, in the first stages of their existence, are hidden out of sight. Like the individual man, they are made secretly, and generations in which they have been maturing and gathering strength pass away unconscious of their growth, until the fulness of the time appointed for their manifestation.

Still chronological divisions are absolutely necessary, and there would seem to be no sufficient reason for rejecting those which custom has rendered familiar to us in European history. It is generally correct to speak of the first eight centuries of our era as the period of the formation of Christendom; the next seven are fitly styled the Middle Ages; and the three which follow, down to the closing decade of the last century, the Renaissance epoch. Thus we are brought to the New Age, in which our lot is cast. But it must never be forgotten that in every case the roots of the later period are buried in the earlier. The new idea germinates under the *débris* of the old order as it falls to decay and dissolution. In this sense, too, the Homeric comparison between the

generations of men and the generations of the leaves, holds good. The world of green furnishes an apt emblem of the life in death which we find in the world of ideas. But further, ideas, like the productions of the vegetable kingdom, are subject in their growth and in their decay to the influence of local and other accidents, sometimes exceedingly difficult to trace. In the happy soil, "where some irriguous valley spreads her lap," they mature more quickly, flourish more luxuriantly, and die sooner than in a land where nature's gifts are less profusely bestowed. Everywhere they obey the same laws, but in the time, the manner, and the measure of their development there are innumerable differences, because in those laws there is diversity of operation.

Bearing these considerations in mind, let us proceed to our inquiry whether liberty is the characteristic note of the Renaissance. And in pursuing this inquiry it will perhaps be best to glance first at the political order. "The dates 1453 and 1527," observes Mr. Symonds, "marking respectively the fall of Constantinople and the sack of Rome, are convenient for fixing in the mind the narrow space of time during which the Renaissance culminated."[1] By common consent the highest point of that culmination would seem to have been reached during the eight years of

[1] *Age of the Despots*, Pref., p. i.

the pontificate of Giovanni de' Medici, celebrated by Pope and a thousand others as "Leo's Golden Days." Let us see what, in point of fact, was the political condition of Europe then. Italy presents "the spectacle of States founded upon force, controlled and moulded by the will of princes, whose object in each case was to maintain their usurped power by mercenary arms, and to deprive the people of political activity."[1] In England we find the all-absorbing, unrestrained despotism of the Tudors; forced loans and benevolences strike at the root of private property; attainders, taking the place of trial by jury at the will of the Government, annihilate security of life and personal freedom; the pleasure of the prince is law to his subjects, his "sic volo sic jubeo" the sufficient motive and defence of legislation. In France there is a tyranny not less crushing, gilded, as in England, by the splendour of a luxurious court. In Germany, "an universal reign of force singularly characterizes this period," "the general disorder of the country had become intolerable."[2] In Spain absolutism had attained a sway which Charles V., who probably saw its danger, was unable to remedy.[3] One of the wisest and best men then living has left us a faithful picture of the state of his times. As Mr. Brewer testifies:—"If any one wishes to see the

[1] Symonds' *Age of the Despots*, p. 126.

[2] Ranke's *Hist. of the Reformation in Germany*, Mrs. Austin's trans., vol. i. p. 220.

[3] Schlegel's *Philos. of Hist.*, Robertson's trans., p. 395.

real condition of Europe at this period; the arbitrary rule of its monarchs, bent on their own aggrandizement, and careless of the improvement of their people; the disputes among their councillors, agreed in one point only—to flatter and mislead their sovereigns; the wide separation between the luxury of the rich and the hopeless misery of the poor; the prevalence of crime; the severe execution of justice, earnest for punishment, but regardless of prevention; the frequency of capital punishment; the depopulation of villages; the engrossing by a few hands of corn and wool; the scarcity of meat; the numbers of idle gentlemen without employment; of idle servingmen and retainers turned adrift on a life of vagabondism: in short, whoever wishes to see society full of the elements of confusion, requiring only a small spark to kindle them into a flame, may read with advantage the *Utopia* of Sir Thomas More."

Strange "new birth to liberty!" Let us now turn to the period of gestation which preceded it. That period Mr. Symonds dates, and rightly, so far as the political order is concerned, from the beginning of the fourteenth century.[2] "It was during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries," he writes, "that the conditions of the Renaissance were evolved, and that the Renaissance itself assumed a definite character

[1] *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII.* Arranged and Catalogued by J. S. Brewer. Vol. ii. part. i. pref. p. cclxxviii.

[2] *Age of the Despots*, p. 12.

in Italy."[1] At that era Italy was the fount of the ideas which ruled throughout Europe. It is, therefore, from Italy that we shall obtain the clearest conception of the course of events.

If any historical fact is established beyond the possibility of cavil, it is that of the high and vigorous national life existing in most of the Italian cities in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Fifty years have passed away since Lord Macaulay wrote, "We doubt whether any country of Europe, our own excepted, has at the present time reached so high a point of wealth and civilization as some parts of Italy had attained four hundred years ago;"[2] and he quotes Giovanni Villani's well-known account of the state of Florence by way of illustration. "Liberty," he further observes, "partially indeed, and transiently, revisited Italy; and with liberty came commerce and empire, science and taste—all the comforts and all the ornaments of life." "The deluge of barbarism receded, the wilderness was as the garden of God, rejoicing on every side, laughing, clapping its hands, pouring forth in spontaneous abundance everything brilliant, and fragrant, and nourishing."[3] Much has been added to our knowledge of the facts of medieval Italian history since these passages were written, and

[1] *Age of the Despots*, p. 35.

[2] Lord Macaulay should have said five hundred years ago. John Villani's account relates to the early part of the fourteenth century.

[3] *Essay on Machiavelli*, in *Works*, vol. v. p. 52.

the evidence which has been so largely accumulated justifies over and over again what is said in them. The offspring, not of mob butchery and pillage, but of the lawful vindication of immemorial rights and chartered immunities against the extortions of feudal lords and barbarian Cesars, the Italian republics, during the too brief period of their glory, furnish the noblest example of civilization in its highest sense,[1] which the world has ever witnessed. There alone, through all the centuries of our era, do we find the realization of Milton's grand idea of a Christian Commonwealth, not founded on any idle figment of the "rights of man," not held together by any visionary threads of social contract, but based upon the religion of Jesus Christ, and firmly compacted by the strong bonds of divinely-sanctioned duties, where "they who are greatest are perpetual servants and drudges to the public at their own cost and charges, neglect their own affairs, yet are not elevated above their brethren, live soberly in their families, walk the streets as other men, may be spoken to freely, familiarly, friendly, without adoration."[2]

It is the lot of all things human "to fade, e'en when they to perfection grow." This flower of liberty, sweet and graceful as the lily of Eden, bloomed fully

[1] Viz. that of eminence in the best characteristic of man and of society, advance in the road to perfection, happiness, nobility, wisdom. See J. S. Mill's *Discussions and Dissertations*, vol. i. p. 160.

[2] *Ready Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth.*

but for a brief one hundred and twenty years.[1] Its decadence begins with the removal of the Apostolic Throne, under the shadow of which it had rejoiced. As the years run their course, "the same event repeats itself in the history of a hundred cities: every town gradually . . . loses its liberties; in each the demagogue stealthily converts himself into the chief of the republic; in each the chief of the republic stealthily or forcibly converts himself into the tyrant; in each the tyrant or his successor procures an outward legitimacy of the wrong by some ceremony, which admits him into the favoured order of acknowledged sovereigns."[2] In Venice, indeed, we do not find the sway of a titular despot established upon the ruins of the republic. But the beginning of the fourteenth century saw the completion there of the series of usurpations by which the aristocracy seized upon the powers of the State, and substituted for the old popular constitution that close and tyrannical oligarchy of which the Council of Ten was the organ. Florence, ever animated by her ancient spirit of freedom, escaped longest the fate of her sister commonwealths; but if she threw off the dominion of the Duke of Athens, it was only to fall by a slow and irretrievable process into the sordid toils of the Medici. The burning appeals of Savonarola are the "last words of expiring liberty" in Italy.

[1] Viz. from the Peace of Constance (1183) to the retirement of the Papal Court to Avignon.

[2] Freeman, *Essay on Ancient Greece and Medieval Italy*, in *Oxford Essays*, 1857, p. 133.

It is, therefore, with simple accuracy that Mr. Symonds has termed the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in Italy, "during which the conditions of the Renaissance were evolved," "the Age of the Despots;" and in the rest of Europe the current of politics was flowing in the same direction. In England the struggles of the thirteenth century, associated pre-eminently with the heroic name of Simon de Montfort, had secured the constitution under which it is our happiness still to live. By the close of that century the principal English towns had made good all the most important rights of self-government which they at present enjoy, and artisan labour was organized with singular completeness in gilds and companies, the disappearance of which from modern society, it is now beginning to be understood, is not, as was once judged, an unmixed benefit. It is extremely difficult to estimate with accuracy the liberty of the subject during the next hundred years. There is a great weight of evidence that by the end of the fourteenth century the condition of the English peasantry was one of abject oppression. It is certain that from the accession of Richard II. security of person and property steadily decreased, notwithstanding the strong assertion by Parliament upon several occasions of the rights and privileges of the people, until the victory of Bosworth gave the crown to Henry VII., and the ancient liberties of England suffered an eclipse under his gloomy despotism.

In France the progress of the decadence of freedom

during the period we are considering is even more absolute. It was under St. Louis that French liberty reached the highest point of development which it has ever attained. In his limitation of feudal jurisdiction, in his rigid repression of judicial combats and private wars, in his provision for the exercise of the right of appeal to the Royal courts, in his legislation for gilds, in his solicitude for the protection and development of the ancient republican constitutions of his cities, this monarch stands alone in the long series of French kings. From Philip the Fair we may trace, sadder spectacle even than the anarchy and desolation of the foreign wars, the consolidation of the central authority by the suppression of those privileges which were the fortresses of liberty. Usurpation succeeds usurpation: one encroachment is but the stepping-stone to another, until every vestige of freedom disappears under the twenty years' tyranny of Louis XI. Spanish history tells a similar tale. The old constitutional liberties of Castile and Arragon were of an amplitude unsurpassed in medieval Europe.[1] The Valentians and Catalans possessed, by virtue of the ancient usages which they so dearly cherished, rights not less extensive. The fifteenth century saw the gradual infringement and curtailment of these privileges, until under Ferdinand the Catholic, who

[1] Mr. Hallam has correctly pointed out that the Arragonese had acquired a positive right of maintaining their liberties by arms, under the Privilege of Union granted by Alfonso III. in 1287. See *Middle Ages*, c. iv.

united the two kingdoms of Arragon and Castile, they were well-nigh rendered a dead letter by the application of arbitrary principles of policy and government. And if we turn to Germany we find there the same course of events under different conditions. The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were the palmy age of Teutonic liberty. Civic independence was secured by illustrious confederations like the Hanseatic Union and the League of the Rhine, while in the several principalities the power of the ruler was strictly limited by immemorial usage and the rights of the provincial states, as well as by the imperial supremacy, which was the "guarantee for legitimacy, security, and permanence."[1] In the fifteenth century all this is changed. The great princes of the Empire were virtually absolute in their own territories; their allegiance to their elective head had become a mere name; the free cities were torn by factions, and were at variance among themselves. A large body of nobles of various degrees, secure in their fortresses, and acknowledging no feudal lord, were so many centres of anarchy. On every side we find a multitude of opposed and quasi-independent powers, "hateful and hating one another." "It was," says Ranke, "the age of universal private war. The right which the supreme independent power had hitherto reserved to itself of resorting to arms when no means of conciliation remained, had descended in

[1] Ranke, *Hist. of the Ref.*, Introduction, p. 54, Mrs. Austin's Trans.

Germany to the inferior classes, and was claimed by nobles and cities against each other, by subjects against their lords; nay, by private persons as far as their means and connections permitted, against each other."[1] Thus in utter lawlessness did German freedom find its extinction.

The political condition of Europe, therefore, at the time of Leo X. was the natural sequence and legitimate outcome of the previous two centuries, and the true description of that condition is absolutism. It is a reproduction in the modern world of antique Cæsarism; all power is gathered up in the person of the prince; all liberties sink into nothingness before his prerogative; even the spiritual order, the last surviving check upon his domination, is either openly defied, or secretly debased into an instrument of his authority. By the end of the sixteenth century despotic monarchy is triumphant throughout Europe. For two centuries more it continues the blight and corruption of national life, until the hour of vengeance, which preachers of justice had tremblingly predicted,[2] strikes, and in the stern reckoning of the Revolution the uttermost farthing of the long accumulated debt is exacted. It is not easy to overstate the debt or to

[1] Ranke, *Hist. of the Ref.*, Introduction, p. 54, Mrs. Austin's Trans.

[2] See particularly a very striking passage in Fénélon's *Sermon for the Feast of the Epiphany* ending "O Dieu! que vois-je? Le jour de la ruine est proche et le temps se hâte d'arriver. Mais adorons en silence et avec tremblement l'impénétrable secret de Dieu."—*Works*, vol. ii. p. 373. Paris: 1838.

paint in too deep colours the depths of misgovernment and political servitude into which Europe had sunk during the three hundred years which followed the supposed "new birth to liberty" of the modern world. France languishing in an oriental despotism, which had written in all too legible characters the tale of its merciless extortions on the "miserable starved faces of the people,"[1] which squandered their blood and treasure at the caprice of harlots, which was not ashamed upon occasion to appear before an amazed world in the part of "Sir Pandarus of Troy;"[2] Spain, in Burke's apt description, rendered "nerveless" by long years of absolutism, not possessing "the use but only the abuse of a nobility;" "the clergy, the only thing in the country that looked an independent order;" "the Inquisition," "become mostly an engine of state," "the sole but unhappy resource of public tranquillity and order which remained;"[3] Germany, save where the mild sway of the ecclesiastical sovereigns prevailed,[4] crushed by Hohenzollern militarism or Josephine doctrinairism, or groaning under the foul despotism of some three

[1] The expression is taken from a letter of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (*Works*, vol. iii. p. 71). St. Simon remarks, "The first king in Europe is great simply by being a king of beggars."

[2] *E. g.* in the affair of Maurice de Saxe and "la petite Chantilly," of which a full history may be found by those who care to look for it in Grimm's *Correspondance Littéraire*, vol. vii. p. 463 (ed. 1829).

[3] Burke, *Thoughts on French Affairs* (*Works*, vol. iv. p. 568).

[4] "It is not easy to conceive governments more mild and indulgent than these Church sovereignties."—*Ibid.*, p. 562.

dozen little potentates, veritable Satyrs and Sileni, who regarded and treated the peasant and burgher classes as mere beasts of burden and sold them like horses for foreign military service;[1]—such are the most salient points in the condition of Europe as the eighteenth century draws to its close. Happily the picture is not wholly unrelieved. In the Catholic cantons of Switzerland Christian democracies still survive. Holland and the Netherlands preserve their hard-won immunities: the Tyrolese retain their local privileges: the Hungarians live tranquilly under the laws of St. Stephen; in the States of the Church[2] municipal self-government prevails to an extent to which the Italy of the present day is a stranger. In England the old medieval liberties, for the vindication of which our forefathers in the previous century counted not their lives dear, had broadened down from precedent to precedent. But these beams of freedom only serve to render more visible the

[1] Stigand's *Life of Heine*, vol. i. p. 7. Mr. Stigand is of opinion that "in the history of humanity nothing can be found to equal the uninventive grossness and dulness of the majority of the German courts of the last century." "In bestiality and immorality of debauchery, however," he admits, "they may lay claim to some originality."

[2] Burke, in his Third Letter on a Regicide Peace (*Works*, vol. v. p. 367), in passing a glowing eulogium upon Pius VI., expresses particular admiration of the "free, fertile, and happy city and state of Bologna," and not without reason. Local self-government in the Pontifical States, resulting, as it did from historical events, differed widely in the several provinces, but, upon the whole, it was very considerable.

darkness of the house of bondage in which the rest of the European peoples languished.

So far, then, as the political order is concerned, it may be confidently affirmed that the Renaissance was not "a new birth unto liberty." Let us now see if that title can be justly claimed for it in literature, and especially in poetry—that highest department of literature,—which, as has been profoundly observed, springing as it does "from man's whole feelings, opinions, activity, may be called the music of his whole manner of being, and is historically the test how far music or freedom existed therein."[1] Here too the growth and fruit of the new idea is best traced under the bright skies of Southern Europe, where it ripened soonest and flourished most luxuriantly.

The greatest name in Italian literature is that of Dante. It is, is some respects, the greatest in all literature. No poet is so intensely real. His is a Muse of Fire, ascending "the brighest Heaven of invention," and bringing thence the essence, the very forms of things, to be burnt into his pages, ineffaceable, imperishable, for ever. He is a true seer, and his intensity is the outcome of the clearness of his sight. The words of the Hebrew poet, "Credidi propter quod locutus sum," may aptly be applied to him. No mists of doubt, no clouds of sensual passion, no vapours of pedantry, interpose to shut out from him the vision. He

[1] Carlyle, *Miscellanies*, vol. i. p. 315.

can deem
Of God, of the world, of the soul,
With a plainness as near
As flashing as Moses felt
When he lay in the night by his flock
On the starlit Arabian waste.

But this unfettered freedom of spiritual insight is not due merely to the high endowments of his passionately earnest nature. It results also from the intellectual atmosphere in which he lived. He has been called "the spokesman of the Middle Ages." And so he is, both as to the thought they lived by and as to the conditions under which it was uttered. He is but one, indeed, of a vast multitude whose song fills those far-off centuries, all of whom, differing as much in the measure of their natural gift as in the vehicle chosen for its expression, are alike in this, that the stamp of freedom is upon their work. Their insight, be it more or less powerful, is unclouded; whether they employ the simple metres used by St. Francis and his brethren in their divine songs, or practise the intricate elaboration found in some of the noblest medieval Latin hymns—compositions for many of which a very high rank may be claimed—"a grace beyond the reach of art" is upon their work. It speaks the thought of the singer, is the true utterance of his own life, all the truer for his entire absence of self-consciousness, his complete self-surrender—as of the nightingale or the linnet—to his strain.

It is just this character of truth which is wanting in the age succeeding that of Dante. The new spirit

which arises is not one of creation but of imitation. Men ceased to draw their inspiration from God, the Soul, Nature, and turned instead to the literature, first, of ancient Rome, and then of ancient Greece. Far be it from me to attempt to pluck a single leaf from the laurelled brows of the poet of Vaucluse, but his chief glory is, not that he was the first to feel the influence of the new idea, but that he remained so much under the dominion of the old. In proportion as he reflects the rising spirit of classicalism, he is frigid and tasteless. It is only when he is distinctly medieval that he is original and true and touching. In him the old and the new order met. After him the new order triumphed. But who remembers even the name of any Italian poet for the next century,—we might almost say for the next two centuries? Of writers of Italian prose in this period, the greatest is undoubtedly Messer Giovanni Boccaccio, the elegance of whose *Decameron* I have no wish to deny. But liberty can be claimed for him only in the sense of lubricity; in no other sense, surely. And the taint which is upon his pages, infects ever more deeply the writers who come after him, as classicalism extends its sway, and with the language which "Dante had created as a thing of power, and which Petrarch had polished as a thing of beauty," the principles and standards of those great masters are abandoned too. It is as though a mist had arisen from the valley of the shadow of death, in which the ancient Pagan world lay buried, shutting out the beauty of the

heavens, the sun, and the moon, and the stars, in whose light previous generations had rejoiced. Saints and angels are no longer seen, but in the gloom there arises the foul spirit of the old idolatry. The place where it had dwelt centuries ago is swept and garnished; and it returns in sevenfold strength. It is hard to conceive of a lower depth of foulness, of more disgusting impurity, than is to be found in some of the new Latinists, foremost in the "revival of letters." The authors of classical antiquity deemed most licentious, pale their ineffectual fires before their modern imitators. The grossest verses of Catullus, the uncleanest utterances of Petronius, are almost pure compared with passages which might be cited from Pontanus and Pacificus Maximus.[1] I have, indeed, no pretension to speak magisterially upon a question of comparative obscenity. But some who have given special attention to that subject are of opinion, that never was the gift of articulate speech so abused, for the purposes of the vilest sensuality, as in Italy at the period of which I speak. The things said then were the genuine expression of the things done then. "Traditi in passiones ignominiæ" is the true description of these Patriarchs and Apostles of the Renaissance. And it will be well if the gospel of "Humanism" and "Sensuousness" so perseveringly preached among us by their nineteeth century disciples, does not

[1] It will be sufficient to mention the volume called *Quinque Illustrium Poetarum Lusus in Venerem* in support of this assertion.

issue in the practice of the worst of their turpitudes, and induce a wide-spread revival of their abominable and unutterable iniquities.

The only sense, then, in which liberty can be predicated of the humanists, in their palmiest Medicean days, is the sense of unbridled licentiousness, which I take to be the deepest slavery. And in truth servitude is the chief note of Renaissance literature from first to last. No subsequent writers in Italy have sinned so deeply in the same way as the new Latinists. But all are to a greater or less extent—to an extent great indeed when least—under captivity to pedantic traditions. Even in Tasso and Ariosto the traces of the fetters of classicalism are only too apparent. Whether either of them possessed "that self-springing invention which we find in a few great poets,"[1] is a question difficult to determine. But it is certain that neither of them could have exercised it, in the conditions under which they wrote. And throughout Europe it is the same. Everywhere, as the spirit of "classicalism" advances, nature gives way to art, creation to copying, life to mechanism. In Spain, it achieves an easy triumph at the beginning of the sixteenth century, when the

[1] Hallam's *Literary Hist. of Europe*, part ii. chap. v. s. 28. Mr. Hallam goes further than I care to do, and decides this question in the negative. He writes :—"Tasso did not possess much of the self-springing invention which belongs to great poets, and which, in this higher sense, I cannot concede to Ariosto. He not only borrows freely, and perhaps studiously, from the ancients, but introduces frequent lines from earlier Italian poets," &c.

old national poetry, instinct with the spirit of ancient liberty, of which the crowning glory is the famous Romance of the Cid, "yields to the influence of Italian models, and Castillejo is obliged to give place to Boscar and Garcilasso."[1] In France, Renaissance literature culminates in the drama of the seventeenth century,—a frigid plagiarism of antiquity, which, not even the great genius of Racine or Corneille, tied and bound by the arbitrary and artificial rules of a system radically vicious, could inform with Promethean fire. No better illustration could be given of the truth of Buffon's dictum—far truer than he deemed—jamais l'imitation n'a rien créé. Of Germany, I need not speak. From the *Niebelungen Lied* to the new era heralded by Lessing and introduced by Goethe, Teutonic literature is a blank. In England, happily, our greatest poet, on the whole, undoubtedly, the world's greatest poet, had written before the sway of the new ideas was established among us. Heine has observed, that it was a piece of right good fortune that Shakespeare came at the right time, while the popular belief of the Middle Ages, though destroyed in principle, still lived in all its enchantment in the heart of men, and upheld itself in their manners, customs, and intuitions.[2] It was, perhaps, a not less piece of good fortune that Shakespere "knew little Latin and less Greek," and that so the *rôle* of imitation was closed against him. The rules of

[1] Trench's *Sacred Latin Poetry*, Int., p. 20. Second edition.

[2] *Shakespeare's Mädchen*, p. 3.

classicalism he knows not of, nor is his mental horizon bounded by the master-pieces of antiquity. Of intellectual freedom he is our supreme example, and for two centuries well-nigh the last example, among English poets. It is only, indeed, in a limited sense, that Milton can, with any justice, be claimed as a product of the Renaissance. In external form, his great epic conforms to its rules, but, in substance, it is no mere reproduction of antiquity. His inspiration comes, not from the Aonian mount, but from Oreb or Sinai, and there is much felicity in the epithet of "Protestant schoolman," which M. Scherer has applied to him.[1] In his earlier poems, *L'Allegro*, *Il Penseroso*, *Lycidas*, Renaissance influence is more strongly traceable. But, even here, as this judicious critic observes, he had but "passed by the way of Italy," and is still "a true Son of the North," "pure but not too rigorous, grave but not fanatical, wholesome and virginal, gracious and yet strong."

Milton is, to some extent, in English literature, historically considered, what Petrarch is in Italian. Each marks the dissolution of the old idea, and the firm establishment of the new. Our true Renaissance period is from the middle of the seventeenth century to the end of the eighteenth. During those hundred and fifty years the *régime* of imitation in English poetry is well-nigh absolute. We can point to a crowd of more or less successful versifiers,—"The mob of gentlemen who wrote with ease;" but that ease

[1] *Études Critiques sur la Littérature*, p. 168.

comes from art, not nature; their muse moves in the measured pace of the minuet, not with "steps of virgin liberty." The two greatest names among them are those of Dryden and Pope: great names, indeed, and conspicuous among the glories of English literature; but still to be ranked in the second order of poets, not the first. Sir Walter Scott held that the distinguishing characteristic of Dryden was "the power of reasoning and of clothing the result in appropriate language." Hallam justly observes that this praise is insufficient, and vindicates for him also the merit of "rapidity of conception and readiness of expression."[1] It may be added that he was, when he chose, a great master of rhythm. In Pope we have the perfection of mastery of form: he, "as it were, engraved ideas." "There is no writer from whom so many of these sparkling epigrammatic sentences, which are the staple commodities of quotation, are introduced into conversation. He has always a masculine fancy: more rarely imagination. But you look in vain [to him or to Dryden] for the truths which come from a large heart or a seeing eye; in vain for the thoughts that breathe and the words that burn; in vain for those flashes of truth, which, like the lightning in a dark night, make all luminous, open out unsuspected glories of tree and sky and building, interpret us to ourselves, and body forth the shapes of things unknown."[2] It was not until the European mind cast

[1] *Literature of Europe*, part iv. c. v. s. 38.

[2] F. W. Robertson, *Lectures and Addresses*, p. 146.

away for ever the fetters of Renaissance traditions that Shelley and Wordsworth became possible in England, that Goethe and Heine were possible in Germany, or Victor Hugo and Alfred de Musset in France. The words of the old world were as dead as its political order; dead, and buried under mountains of worthless forms which the great tempest of Revolution was to sweep away, with so much else.

> Down came the storm! In ruins fell
> The outworn world we knew.
> It passed, that elemental swell!
> Again appeared the blue.

I pass on to what the nomenclature of the present time calls, in its vague way, "art," meaning thereby, generally, the arts of design. In them, as in the whole of the intellectual province which the Greeks termed μουσική, beauty is inseparable from truth, and truth from liberty; and here, as is commonly supposed, is the especial field of Renaissance emancipation. It would be easy to accumulate authorities who put forward this view. But it will perhaps be sufficient to quote Mr. Symonds, who does not hesitate roundly to affirm that "the study of Greek resuscitated a sense of the beautiful in art."[1] Is this true? The inquiry is not of an abstract kind. The evidence it depends upon is before men's eyes. Let us

[1] *Revival of Learning*, p. 112.

look at that evidence as existing works of architecture, sculpture, and painting present it.

The architectural monuments (I am not speaking of ruins) at present to be found in Europe, with a few exceptions,—of which the most notable are the Pantheon at Rome, the Maison Carrée at Nismes, and the so-called Theseum at Athens, certain Byzantine structures, and the churches of the basilica form at Rome, at Ravenna, and in the Patriarchate of Venice,—may, with sufficient accuracy, be distinguished as medieval and neo-classical. The former are the product of one idea, the progressive expansion of which may be traced from the rude and inchoate Romanesque, through all its diversities of manifestation, in the different regions of Europe. The latter are imitations, more or less exact, of antique models, selected at the fancy of the copyist or his patron, and cannot be referred to any one type nor be said to evidence that growth which is never absent from intellectual life. Mr. Ruskin, indeed, allows of a kind of development of Renaissance architecture and distinguishes between three varieties of it,—the Early Renaissance, the Roman Renaissance, and the Grotesque Renaissance.[1] The distinction, doubtless, rests upon good grounds, but it is unnecessary here to consider it. It is sufficient for my purpose to look at the architecture of the Middle Ages, and at that of the Renaissance period, as a whole. Are beauty and freedom absent from the former, and do they characterize the latter?

[1] *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. p. 3.

Upon this question I unhesitatingly take my stand with the accomplished critic just mentioned, who, surveying the arts of design from the loftiest point of view, has delivered to the world his message concerning them in earnest and noble words, from which I gladly borrow. Mr. Ruskin has pointed out with perfect truth that in the principal schools of the ancient world, the Greek, the Ninevite, the Egyptian, servitude is the note of architectural ornament, inasmuch as "the execution or power of the inferior workman is entirely subjected to the intellect of the higher."[1] But, as he goes on to show, "in the medieval system of ornament this slavery is done away, Christianity having recognized, in small things as in great, the individual value of every soul." And he deems it, not unjustly, "the principal admirableness of Gothic schools of architecture that they thus receive the results of the labours of inferior minds, and out of fragments full of imperfection, and betraying that imperfection in every touch, indulgently raise up a stately and unaccusable whole." From this proceeds the copiousness and variety of medieval architecture, its "perpetual change both in design and execution,"[2] the "strange disquietude of the Gothic spirit that is its greatness."[3] And from the same source comes the naturalism of this architecture; "that is to say, the love of natural objects for their own sake, and the effort to represent them frankly,

[1] *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. p. 158.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 172. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 181.

unconstrained by artistical laws."[1] Nor is it amiss to notice here how powerfully the condition of freedom in which the workman in medieval buildings laboured, reacted upon himself.[2] The thoughts of his heart, grave or gay, simple or fantastic, found expression in his work. The architectural monuments of the Middle Ages which still adorn Europe were wrought by free and intelligent artists, and truly symbolize the dominant principles in the lives of their builders. Faith in the Unseen, aspiration towards the Infinite, are written on "the features which were the distinctive creation of the Gothic schools; in the varied foliage, and thorny fretwork, and shadowy niches, and buttressed pier, and fearless height of subtle pinnacle and crested tower, sent like 'an unperplexed question up to heaven.'"[3]

Far other are the characteristics of Renaissance architecture. I am not, indeed, concerned to deny the merit of particular buildings. I am not insensible to the voluptuous pomp of the Gesù at Rome, to the richness of material and elegance of detail of Santa Maria della Salute at Venice. I do not doubt the excellence, after their kind, of many of the works of Palladio and Galeasso Alessi, of François Mansard and Inigo Jones. But these structures differ as widely in *motif* from such piles as the Abbey Church and Hall of Westminster, the Cathedral of Amiens,

[1] *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. p. 181.

[2] See a powerful passage on this subject in Mr. Ruskin's *Lectures on Architecture*, p. 134.

[3] *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. p. 206.

and the Duomo of Pisa, as a play of Racine differs from a play of Shakespeare. The Renaissance architects, like the Renaissance poets, worked in chains, the iron whereof entered into their soul. For truth, they have a parade of science; for imagination, "correctness:" cold and earthly, they are satisfied with the observance of their self-imposed rules; grace and fancy are ruthlessly sacrificed to Procrustean forms. The note of servitude is upon the neo-classical architecture, even more fully than upon the architecture of the ancient world. The designer no longer creates; he copies, adapts, contrives; technical skill is the highest accomplishment of the artisan, sunk into an animated tool, "a mere machine, with its valves smoothed by heart's blood instead of oil, the most pitiable form of slave." Exitus acta probat. "Renaissance architecture is the school which has conducted men's inventive faculties, from the Grand Canal to Gower-street; from the marble shaft and the lancet-arch, the wreathed leafage and the glowing and melting harmony of gold and azure, to the square cavity in the brick wall."[2]

Such is, in substance, the base captivity into which the Renaissance reduced the architecture of Europe. In sculpture its servile worship of antiquity has produced even more fatal effects, inasmuch as it has brought this, the most chaste and ideal of the arts of design, under bondage to vulgar sensuousness and

[1] Ruskin's *Lectures on Architecture*, p. 134.
[2] *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. p. 2.

grovelling materialism. Originally employed in Christendom merely in the way of architectual decoration, sculpture received, in the true "golden days" of Italy, the period of her free cities, a development, no less important than that experienced by her literature. And for three centuries the progress of this art obeyed the impulse which Nicola Pisano primarily gave, and followed the principles which he first struck out. What those principles were his bas-reliefs on the Duomo at Lucca, in the Pisan Baptistery, on the shrine of St. Dominic at Bologna, and the fountain with which he adorned Perugia, the most valuable possession of the city, as its magistrates judged, remain to tell us. How faithfully that impulse was followed is abundantly shown by the works of his son Giovanni, of Andrea Pisano and Orcagna, of Lorenzo Maitani and Giacomo della Quercia, of Luca delle Robbia and Matteo Civitali, of Ghiberti and Donatello, to mention only a few great names from the illustrious series of his successors. All these consummate artists, while working in one spirit and true to one idea, developed the gift which was within them with a noble audacity, an untrammelled freedom of conception, which is the secret of their grandeur and their pathos. "The style of these masters," Mr. Symonds remarks, "was distinguished by a fresh and charming naturalism, and by rapid growth in technical processes. . . . The revived interest in antique literature widened their sympathies and supplied their fancy with new

materials; but there is no imitative formalism in their work . . . vitalized by the imagination of the artist, and presented with the originality of true creative instinct."[1] New ideas make their way in the library much sooner than in the studio. The fine arts are eminently Conservative. Sculpture and painting held out against the spirit of classicalism in Italy far longer than literature. It was not until Michael Angelo had passed away that the triumph of the Renaissance spirit in plastic art was complete. Keenly alive as that great genius was to the beauties of the antique, it was upon the teachings of nature, far more than upon those of any master-pieces of the ancient world, that he formed himself. "Absorbed

[1] Symonds' *Renaissance in Italy—The Fine Arts*, p. 178. The whole of this chapter is worth careful study. It is one of the best in the book. I differ, indeed, widely from Mr. Symonds, both as to his general point of view, and as to many particular theories which he broaches. Thus I consider him deplorably in error in dating "the æsthetic Renaissance"—taking the word in the sense of the revival of the old classical spirit—"from Nicola Pisano, with the same certainty as from Petrarch that of Humanism" (p. 101). It would be far more correct to parallel Petrarch with Donatello in sculpture, and with Boticelli in painting. The parallel, indeed, must not be pressed too closely; still it is upon Donatello and Boticelli in their respective arts, as upon Petrarch in literature, that the shadow of revived paganism first distinctly falls. It is, in truth, only a shadow. But previously, we may say, the purely Christian *motif* of the great Italian masters is unclouded. Those earlier masters indeed enlarged their artistic range, and refined their artistic sense, by drawing from every fresh source which opened out to them. But what they thus acquired they assimilated into the old medieval idea, not overlaying that idea with foreign accretions, still less, contemptuously casting it away, as the men of the Renaissance did.

in his own conceptions, he worked from within outwards."[1] In him, after half a century of barrenness, medieval sculpture culminates. After him, in the place of fancy, invention, the reaching after something beyond the actual, we have the servile copying of the living model, or the equally servile imitation of the Apollos, Mercuries, and Fauns of antiquity, utterly unmeaning and untrue parodies of an extinct past.[2]

And, as in sculpture so in painting, the effect of the Renaissance was to fetter art by pedantry and unreality, and to render it oblivious of its glorious tradition—a tradition reaching back to the very first days of Christianity, when the Catacombs, which served as the cradle of the infant Church, were also the earliest repositories of Catholic art. In the Pastor Bonus, the Madonna, the symbolic paintings which we find there, touching confessions of the faith, which the rude artists often sealed with their blood, we have the germs of the pictorial art of Christendom. From the age of the Catacombs to the thirteenth century few relics of Christian painting remain to us; but the frescoes discovered of late years in San Clemente sufficiently show that the

[1] Perkins, *Tuscan Sculptors*, vol. ii. p. 7.

[2] Mr. Perkins, at the close of the first volume of his admirable work, gives the following summary of the history of Tuscan sculpture:—"The artist had first spoken, because he had something to say; then perceiving that he might say it better, he reached a more perfect stage. Lastly, he arrived solely at beauty of surface, and thought died; upon the death of which vital principle, technical perfection also expired, and nullity remained."—Vol. i. p. 266.

old ideals were lovingly followed, and received such expansion as the times allowed. It is in the culminating age of medieval liberty that the greatest advance is made, when the genius of Cimabue solved the problem how to reconcile respect for traditional types with the liberty of individual inspiration. Who can gaze unmoved at his venerable Madonna of the Rucellai, so pensive and pitiful in her serene, unearthly beauty, as she turns "the star-lit sorrows of immortal eyes" upon the generations of her worshippers? Six centuries have passed away since she was brought forth with shouting and carried to her New Church, the Quarter through which she passed thenceforward to be known as Joyful; and there she still hangs, the type and fount of the development of Christian art. From Cimabue, and his greater disciple Giotto, taken, like the Hebrew monarch, "as he was following the ewes great with young ones," to feed the people "in the innocence of his heart, and to conduct them by the skilfulness of his hands," the tradition is uniform, and it is a tradition of liberty. Whether we turn to the school of Sienna or of Florence, of Umbria, or Milan, or Ferrara, we find the painter, whatever period of development his art may have reached, boldly opening fresh paths, as his genius prompts, but ever drinking in his inspiration from Truth and Nature. What man can look at Orcagna's Triumph of Death, the Angel Choirs of Beato Angelico, the Madonnas of Fra Francia and Fra Bartolommeo, the St. Michael of

Perugino, or Raphael's St. Catherine, and doubt the perfect freedom with which these masters worked, their undimmed inner sight discerning the thing in its wholeness which their hands were to body forth?

All medieval art leads up to Raphael and Michael Angelo. They are its supreme products. All Renaissance art leads down from them. "With one exception,"[1] writes Ranke, "the scholars of Raphael were wholly degenerate. While they endeavoured to imitate him, they lost themselves in artificial beauty, theatrical attitudes, affected graces; and their works bear sufficient evidence of the total want of warmth or sense of beauty in the soul which conceived them. The scholars of Michael Angelo did no better. Art had lost all comprehension of her object; she had discarded the ideas which she had formerly taxed all her powers to clothe with forms; she retained nothing but the externals of method. . . . Some traces of inspiration remained in the Venetian school alone."[2] By-and-by, it is true, painting again essayed to return to the ancient paths. But classicalism had destroyed her freedom, her simplicity, her purity and truth. The Carracci, Domenichino, Guido Reni, are as inferior to the old masters in originality as they are superior in technical execution. There is ever something forced and fantastic about them, and after them, there is the

[1] It is hardly necessary to observe that the "one exception" is Giulio Romano.

[2] Ranke's *History of the Popes*, vol. i. p. 337 (Mrs. Austin's translation).

completest degeneracy, and the art of painting is degraded to the lowest mechanical labour.

What I have said of painting and sculpture has been confined to Italy, advisedly; for, so far as these arts are concerned, that land of beauty stands forth as the representative of Europe, testifying only too clearly that the Renaissance was in no sense a "new birth unto liberty." Mr. Ruskin has admirably observed, "Art is nothing but a noble and expressive language, invaluable as the vehicle of thought, but in itself nothing."[1] The effect of the Renaissance upon this language was to restrict it to the ideas of a dead world. It held out antiquity to the artist as a sort of dictionary, where phrases ready made were to be found; and the result is, that there is as much freedom in the conceptions thence derived as in schoolboys' verses tessellated together from a "Gradus ad Parnassum." As in politics and in literature, so here also, the Renaissance was a spirit of slavery, a veritable Goddess of Dulness, at whose

> felt approach and secret might
> Art after art goes out, and all is night.

There is one exception, and only one—unless, indeed saltation and cookery are to be reckoned among the fine arts—and that exception is just where we might expect to find it in a period of servitude. The art of music put forth marvellous developments during those three centuries of enslavement. The music of

[1] *Modern Painters*, part i. sec. i. c. 2.

the Middle Ages was a fitting accompaniment of their life. Grave, earnest, heart-stirring, the melodies of the old modes, so austerely beautiful, were true Tyrtean strains, worthy of freemen. But when freedom had departed, and the deadening *régime* of classicalism oppressed a weary and heavy-laden world, the great masters of the modern school arose, and made of musical sound an instrument potent to cheer, to tranquillize, to subdue, welcome as sleep to weary eyes, as the springing well to the parched throat; nay, it may be said, without hyperbole, able "to create a soul under the ribs of death." From Palestrina to Carissimi, from Pergolese to Bach, from Gluck to Mozart, from Handel to Haydn, the heavenly secret was whispered down. No generation lacked gifted souls, who caught and recorded, for the perpetual joy and solace of mankind, the "outpourings of eternal harmonies" which fell upon their trembling ears. Thus, in an age of the world becoming ever more and more sensual and material and slavish, the spiritual liberty of man is not left without witness. The source of deep and pure emotion, of sublimity and beauty, opened to him in music, is an imperishable vindication of his divine birthright, of

> the glories he hath known,
> And that imperial palace whence he came.

It remains that we pursue our inquiry in the domain of "Science." Was the Renaissance there a

new birth unto liberty? And here, once more, I am under the necessity of defining. It is the fashion of the day to narrow the application of the term science to physics, as though there were no sciences except the physical, as though the physical sciences, dealing as they do merely with the "beggarly elements" of the external universe, were not in truth the lowest and least noble of all. Let me here record a protest against this deep degradation of so high a word. For myself I use it to denote the logical apprehension of the facts as underlain by principles, which relate to any department of human knowledge. But as all facts are from the One God, who is the Maker, Guardian, Worker, Perfecter of all, and bear the impress of His Unity, so each science being but the classification of this or that set of facts, or, to speak more accurately, of particular aspects of those facts, is intimately connected with—nay, in some sense is dependent upon—all the rest. Roger Bacon has well expressed this truth: "Omnes scientiæ sunt connexæ et mutuis se fovent auxiliis, sicut partes ejusdem totius, quarum quælibet opus suum peragit, non solum propter se sed pro aliis; ut oculus totum corpus dirigit, et pes totum sustentat, et de loco ad locum deducit; et sic de aliis. Unde pars extra totum est sicut oculus erutus, vel pes abscissus; et sic erit de partibus sapientiæ; nam nulla consequitur sui utilitatem sine alia, cum sint partes ejusdem sapientiæ totalis." [1]

[1] *Opus Tertium*, c. iv.

Thus should we deem of the sciences, rightly figured in the phrase which still lingers among us, although with small remnant of its true meaning, as a circle. And surely at the very centre of that circle must be placed the science of God, if such a science exists. If there are any facts about God cognizable by us, the apprehension of those facts must, without controversy, take the first place among the subjects of human knowledge. This was the place theology held in the Middle Age. That it was indeed a science, and the queen of sciences, no one doubted, and the great works which remain to us testify sufficiently with what vigorous originality it was cultivated. One colossal intellect after another toiled in building up the mighty fabric of the School divinity, the chief of all, the Angelic Doctor, appearing, as was congruous, in the age of Dante and Giotto. It is not necessary for me to dwell upon the immense learning and acute knowledge with which these great masters pursued their profound speculations. In no other age of the world, probably, could they have accomplished the task to which they set themselves, for in no other age of the world would they have worked with the same freedom of light. Their method was the most exact and careful application of human reason to the *data* of revelation. The existence of God and His manifestation of Himself in Christ supplied first principles, which all men accepted. And from those the whole system of divinity and morals was deduced by a proof as strict as that by which the propositions of the

several books of Euclid result from the definitions, postulates, and axioms. With the old Schoolmen, that God was the basis of all truth, the foundation of all science, was not a piece of pious rhetoric, but a scientific axiom. Necessary truth is unchangeable, they said, simply on account of His immutability: His All-holy Nature is the source of morality, His Eternal Word the sanction of certainty. In this spirit they pursued their labours in every department of human thought, freely using in their search after truth every instrument proper for its discovery: observation, induction, deduction, abstraction, speculation.

One of the first effects of the "Revival of Letters" was to bring scholasticism into discredit. To "the empty-headed pedants and conceited rhetoricians who had eaten out all that was valuable in their lives in the successful attempt to acquire a correct Latin style,"[1] the vigorous living medieval Latinity of St. Anselm, St. Thomas, and St. Bonaventura, was a rock of offence. The methods and doctrines of the masters of the medieval schools soon shared in the discredit which was cast upon their diction. Their exactness was vilified as verbal hairsplitting, their profound speculations as idle subtilty, by "an age of conceited, self-sufficient half-learning, of meretricious eloquence, of inflated, arrogant littleness."[2] And the sciences

[1] See Archdeacon Farrar's *Essay on Greek and Latin Verse Composition*, in *Essays on a Liberal Education*, p. 237.

[2] *Ibid.*

which they had most highly esteemed and most carefully cultivated suffered earliest and most deeply. The doctors of the Church were deserted for Cicero. Great ecclesiastics shunned, and bade others shun, the reading of the Sacred Scriptures as fatal to "taste." All that was most distinctively Christian was travestied under Pagan disguises.[1] The Apostles Peter and Paul were described as Dii titulares Romæ. Our Lady of Loretto became Dea Lauretana. Even "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" was spoken of as Jupiter Optimus Maximus and Regnator Olympi.

The greatest name among the scholars of the Renaissance is that of Desiderius Erasmus. Whatever estimate we may form of his enigmatical character, it is impossible to read his *Colloquies* or his *Praise of Folly* without feeling that he was a man of real genius, and so very different from the animated bookcases whom his age delighted to honour. In his writings are the materials for most correctly appreciating the philosophical tendencies of the great intellectual movement in which he played a far more important part than he was aware of. It is especially noteworthy how far his mind was removed from the fundamental positions of the old theologians. His principles did not, indeed, receive their full development until many generations after him, although some of his immediate disciples went far beyond him, the boldest and most consistent of them being, perhaps, Zwingli. But the adherents of the new

[1] On this subject see Symonds' *Revival of Learning*, p. 396.

learning were everywhere conspicuous for a contempt of the great masters of the medieval schools, a contempt carried so far that the very name of the Subtle Doctor was degraded into a byword for invincible stupidity. Everywhere "the *litteræ humaniores* of the student encroach upon the *divinarum rerum cognitio* of the theologian," the result being in the south of Europe the prevalence of a cynical paganism, and in the north the foundation of a multitude of jarring sects, with contradictory and everchanging symbols, constant only in their implacable hatred of the Catholic religion and of one another.

This was the effect of the Renaissance upon theology—to discredit it, and, in the event, to strike it out of the circle of the sciences, all of which thence suffered, although in different degrees. The moral and metaphysical, which we vaguely term philosophy, were affected first and most deeply. The close tie which had bound them to theology was severed, and they had to seek elsewhere for the home that they had hitherto found in the household of faith. The old principles and methods of speculation were still followed indeed by some powerful and patient intellects, such as Suarez, Lugo, and Petavius. But the general stream of European thought was flowing in another direction. At first philosophy transferred its allegiance to Antiquity, under the guidance of the neo-Platonists of Italy. But (as Mr. Lewes observes) "this new authority was altogether human, yet without any deep roots in the life of the nation, without

any external constituted power, consequently very liable to disunion and disruption, and certain to give way before the necessary insurgence of reason insisting on freedom."[1] It did give way, indeed, but freedom was not the result. Philosophy escaped from the bondage of Classicalism only to fall under the yoke of Materialism, and to issue in Nihilism. As to the physical sciences, it would be hard to find an example more forcibly illustrating the power of inveterate tradition than the popular notion which still regards Lord Bacon as a master of them, and the inventor of a new method for arriving at natural truths. It should not, indeed, ordinarily excite surprise in these days of ephemeral literature, and speech as empty as it is fluent, that the multitude of those who talk glibly or write magisterially, *ad populum*, should have little knowledge—and that little usually obtained at second-hand—regarding the great names with which they are so insolently familiar. But the works of Lord Macaulay are in every one's hands, and his famous essay might reasonably have been expected to be fatal to Lord Bacon's reputation as the author of induction. If any facts about Lord Bacon are clearly established, they are these: that he never invented anything;[2] that he was strangely ignorant of the achievements of the principal physicists of his own

[1] Lewes's *Hist. of Philos.*, vol. ii. p. 90.

[2] Except perhaps his rules for induction, of which it is unnecessary to speak, as by common assent they are acknowledged to be worthless.

day; and that such knowledge as he did possess was exceedingly inexact. The few isolated truths he is supposed to have discovered may, without exception, be found in the writings of his far greater namesake, whence there is good reason for presuming them to have been "conveyed." It is, indeed, Roger Bacon—the Franciscan Friar of the thirteenth century—who should be regarded as the "pioneer of modern discovery,"[1] the precursor of those inventions which are so triumphantly claimed as the result of the "new philosophy" of King James the First's Lord Chancellor. It is absolutely certain that the progress of the physical sciences, in which the modern world finds its crown of rejoicing, by no means dates from the revival of letters: it is a simple matter of chronological fact, that "nearly all the inventions whereby we yet live as civilized men," come down to us from the Middle Ages. Our medieval forefathers laboured, and we have entered into their labours, as they in their day reaped what the generations before them had sown. The stream of physical knowledge flows on steadily through the centuries, ever broadening in its course. One discovery is almost of necessity the parent of another. It may, then, be securely asserted that Lord Bacon did nothing to merit the praise still commonly bestowed upon him, of having emancipated the study of physics by the introduction of a new method. Nor is it true that such emancipation was

[1] See Mr. Brewer's Preface to *Fr. Rogeri Bacon Opera quædam hactenus inedita.*

wrought by Renaissance ideas. Here, as elsewhere, the dictum of Littré holds good: "dans le mot Renaissance est impliqué tout le préjugé qui a pesé sur le moyen age." [1]

So much must suffice regarding the question which I have set myself to consider in this chapter. I have of necessity been restricted to its barest outlines. Fully to discuss it would require a volume, or rather an encyclopædia. I am content if what I have written at all adumbrates the truth, that whatever the Renaissance was, it was not a new birth unto liberty either in politics or in literature, in art or in science.

[1] *Études sur les Barbares et le Moyen Age*, p. 239.

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